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THE CLIFFS

(A Drama of the Time, in Five Parts)

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THE CLIFFS

BY CHARLES M. DOUGHTY

AUTHOR OF 'ADAM CAST FORTH'
'THE DAWN IN BRITAIN' AND
'TRAVELS IN ARABIA DESERTA'

Imperii casus appropinquat.

CICERO.



LONDON: DUCKWORTH & CO.

3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1909

PK
6507
D74c

ALMAE PATRIAE

653507

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SIRION, divine shining One from heaven ; one of the Mighty Powers of the Universe.

YAMÎN and SHEMÔL ; two strong heavenly Spirits, with Sirion.

TRUTH, (sunborn eternally on the Earth ;) and a company of LIGHT ELVES with him.

JOHN HOBBE, Crimean veteran, now a shepherd on the Cliff.

CAPTAIN PAKENHAM, R.N., commanding the Coastguard.

VICAR MANBY.

SURGEON NEWTON.

LITTLE JAMES, DOWELLS SON.

GARLAND, HALLIDAY, HEARTY ; Coastguards.

DRAWLATCH, Sexton.

WARD, Constable.

HULBERT, a fisherman.

GODWIN and FREEMAN, two yeomen-farmers.

JOHN NEWLANDS, miller.

EARLY, Postman.

VILLAGERS, men and women.

TWO FOREIGN AERONAUTS, with their MACHINIST ; that are Spies.

TWO ENGLISH AERONAUTS, of the fraternity of the Sacred Band.

SIR ROBERT BOND, a yachtsman, with friends and mariners.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, NEWSBOY, SOLDIERS, and others.

POSTMISTRESS DOWELL.

ALITTLE DEFORMED MAIDEN, (a ladys daughter, living abroad.)

MAKEPEACE, John Hobbes wife, (who does not speak.)

SOULS OF BRITAINS SLEEPERS.

GHOSTS OF ENGLANDS HERO-DEAD.

FOREIGN GHOSTS ; (BUONAPARTE and THE MAID OF ORLEANS.)

PART I

THE CLIFFS

PART I

(An open heath-cliff in East Anglia : misty moonlight.

JOHN HOBBE, Crimean veteran, now an aged shepherd, comes halting by, wrapped in an old horse-man's cloak, and leaning heavily on his crome.)

HOBBE. Now in my once young veins, begins to creep
Dull age, rheums too. I moun, these lambing
nights,

Lie out, in wind and wet, amongst the ewes,
In fold ; that now I 've pitched gin the heath-croft.
I feed them there of rapes, to give them strength.

I may not rest, as I wor wont to sleep ;
So a wimble bores my brain, of busy thought :
Wherefore, what though 't be chill for an old wight,
I 've left them ruckling mother sheep ; to pace
Awhile here to and forth, longs the sea-cliff.

My windpipes wheeze, comes on me the old cough,
When out of the East it blows, over this heath.

THE CLIFFS

'T will soon be five year, come next Michaelmas,
Since when, being superannuate, as they called it,
I 'm home returned here, to my fathers' trade ;
That 's to keep sheep. I 've so far thriven in it,
There 's nigh an hundred hoggerels now to shear,
In the new moon : for, when the moon is making,
The fleece is best. 'T will be a bit for us,
That are poor folk. There 's more than most wot of,
In shepherds craft : to know, when ails them aught :
And there 's the bot and there 's the rot, and such-
like :

What water, feed and air should do them good ;
What dip to use ; there 's nothing like to tar,
For wounds : and when renews itself the year ;
Which herbs and worts were best in every season.
And how to pitch your pen in wind and rain,
To give most harbour ; and in drought most air.
There 's dipping, shearing, marking then the flock ;
There 's severance of your yearling ewes and rams ;
And rearing of them eanlings of yows lost.

All John Hobbes shepherds were, round Clay-
bourne heath,
Far back as men have memory. They in church-
Yard mould lie graved now, under yewen bough,
Arow : and over them dreeps the cold dew,

THE CLIFFS

And falls the rain, and seldwhiles shines the sun.

I mind those five head-stones, with five green
mounds,

And mothers too : the sixth will mine be soon,
Nigh Corporal Hobbe, (I put up that myself,)
My father ; and next mother Anne, his wife.

Within a while, there'll three-score years be
passed ;

Since I, for wounds received in Englands wars,
Go halting on a staff. Was fifty-four
The year, when I a youth, yet under age,
Enlisted. Many tall lads in those days,
Would take the sergeants shilling. War, for Eng-
land ;

And to be sent, to see the world, seemed to us,
A glorious part : but few of us turned home ;
And of those few, the more with loss of limb.

At months end, our draft sailed. The third
I was

Wounded in battle ; thinned were our red ranks.
In that first field I saw ten thousand fall,
On either part. At bloody Inkerman,
The ' Soldiers Battle,' I all day again
Fought ; when our two brigades, in Winters mist,

THE CLIFFS

Held ground, gainst forty Russian regiments !
A ball my schako drilled, three bored my coat.

Out of our trenches, a third time, I fought :
'T was moonlight, when we stormed a Russian
breach.

Tall Major Boyse, who led us, was in first ;
I next. *England*, with shining blade aloft,
He cried, *for ever, lads ; our lives for England !*
And in that fell : the blood ran from his breast,
'T was I who caught our major in mine arms :
I bayoneted him who shot him ; swarmed out on us
Blue Russians, in bright moonlight. Long then was
And deadly our strife ; fierce fighting hand to hand ;
Our officers with sharp swords, we men with
bayonets.

We, though our foes were five to one of us,
Wan, with hurrahs ! ditch, rampart and hornwork.
One after other, fell our officers ;
Then last I saw a sergeant take command ;
One we named Fergus, a brave Northern man.

No more I knew : under a flag of truce,
Gathered at day the fallen were ; and when us
The surgeons had inspected, one by one ;
I on the dead-cart was mongst soldiers dead

THE CLIFFS

Laid ; and that driven then to the grave-trench was.
There on the brinks those, shrouded in their cloaks,
White with night rime, were in long rows, outlaid :
And pinned, on his cold breast, was each mans
name.

Yet for some sign, then showed in me of life,
I 've heard say, 't was a movement of this hand ;
I with the other corses was not cast ;
When *Earth to earth, and dust*, our chaplain said,
Down in the common pit. Come to myself,
I in hospital, languished slowly back to life.

Rejoined my company, hardly fifty soldiers,
Now all told, and many fought with bandaged
wounds ;

Once more I, amongst our battle-ranks advanced,
Gainst dinning wall of hell-fire, smoke and shot.
In that the regimental trumpeter sounded ;
With hideous schreech, a shrapnel shell burst o'er us.

Men round me fell, for that was stuffed with
grape ;
I amidst them lay, hip-shattered and half dead :
And saw sway to and fro, long mortal fight.
The enemy's heavy columns o'er us passed ;
But by a British charge, being butted back ;

THE CLIFFS

Those bayoneted wounded soldiers on the ground !
For which we deadly hated them again.

When they had been repulsed, at bayonet-point,
And British regiments held, at dusk, the field ;
There few of us shell-hurt and mangled soldiers,
Yet in that place we fell, remained alive.

Next hour there went by searchers of the ground,
With lanterns, stretchers, English shout and guard ;
And us, that wearily cried for help and drink,
They bleeding heaps found, stiffened in night frost ;
And more than aught, that cold had anguished us.
'T was midnight, ere my splintered bones were set ;
And dressed in my delirium were my wounds :
One-coloured with my tunic was my shirt !

After three weeks, I invalided home,
Was borne forth, by my comrades, to the shore ;
Embarked, and hoisted the *Royal George* aboard ;
Was she a battleship, without her guns ;
Our floating hospital. We at that months end,
Having full complement now of invalids,
Weighed with fair wind ; and joyful sailed for
home.

Month-long, through the East Seas, our gallant
ship,

THE CLIFFS

Stooping to prosperous gales, had held her
voyage :

Passed then the Straits ; we watched the Polestar
rise.

But in the Bay, fell sore night-tempest on us ;
Wherein were not few vessels cast away,
In weather thick, and lost. As for the *George*,
We shortened sail and sent down spars and top-
masts,

Before the storm fell. We had not been able,
In rain and squall, ere the wind veered, to make
Out Ushant Light. The *George*, much tossed, at
midnight,

Being by dead reckoning as the Master judged,
(Allowed for currents off the Spanish Capes,)
Scant eighty mile, from Englands Western coast,
We altered course ; and close-reefed bore up thus.
When order was being given, to light fires,
Under the boilers ; (for an head of steam
Should help our sails ; whilst steadied those the
ship :)

We suddenly fell mongst breakers and ledged rocks.

Before us headland loomed of Englands cliffs,
In misty moonlight. Shuddered the great ship,
From deck to bilge ; grounded, lost way, sate fast ;

THE CLIFFS

And blew out her rent topsails from the yards.

Waked from night sleep, we heard the Captains
voice,

Calling for Volunteers, to lift the sick.

A thousand wounded lay, in her sick-bays,

For such was all the ship : few then had force,

To creep out of their cots, and climb the hatch.

Sounded the boatswains pipe, To lower boats :

But those were few ; and in dark rage of waves,

With loads of invalids, could not have lived :

Nor was there shore, twixt sea and the cliffs foot.

By great adventure then, High Power of God !

That blast slacked : seas huge-lifted hurling flood,

Ship-buffeting breakers' race, went down around us.

Anchors, borne between boats, then were laid out ;

And capstans manned : whereon heaved hundred
hands,

Treading, with all their might, to music round.

In that a rising tide stirred the great ship :

Lifted her keel, and fell her forefoot off.

Midst cheers we warped to seaward. Battleships

Had engines in those days, of little force.

Scaped from that peril, we at day stood off,

Under raised steam and canvas, with a leak

Forward of the ships working on sharp rocks.

THE CLIFFS

Toiled our ships company then, in hourly shifts,
With a heave and a how-so-ho! at the chain-
pumps.

'T was afternoon when lifted the sea-mist :
The Sun shone out, as we the Eddystone passed.
Bearing in with the Land, we sick ones watched
From our portholes, the green Home-coast, till
sunset.

We had saluted, and held on half-furled ;
And at gunfire on shore hauled down our flag ;
When anchor was let go, in Plymouth port.

Thus I returned home, yet a beardless youth ;
My other short leg kicking in a sling,
Twixt hospital crutches, bent, when I was set
Ashore, like an old man. The Medical Board
Reported me, as unfit for further service ;
And with a pension, for my wounds, I was
Discharged. One evening from the Royal Blue,
(Was that our Norwich coach,) I, a cripple, lighted
Before my fathers gate ; men help me forth :
And passed our garden, when I stood again,
And drew the latch, under our woodbine porch ;
(How ofttimes had I seen this in my thought,
In hospital, and when swinging in my cot,
At sea !) Came mother running ; and her son

THE CLIFFS

Knew hardly again, whom she with cries embraced !

Risen from his stool, beside the hearth ; strode
forth

My father, stern Peninsular old soldier ;
Who in hundred hard-fought battles, had his part,
Under the Iron Duke, gainst Buonaparte.

When father, with his pigtail, stood in church,
Upright, on Sundays, in his shepherds coat ;
With soldiers medals glittering on his breast ;
He seemed a pillar, fit to bear the roof !

In his stiff arms, he bore me, into the house.
Then only, in laying down his smouldering pipe,
' Young John,' said he, ' why, unbeknown to us,
Went'st thou a-soldiering, to this Russian war ?
Much sorrow hath Anne thy mother had therefore.
We 've none but thee, son. Howsomever, John,
That pleaseth me, which thy colonel lately writ ;
That thou hast borne thyself in all aright,
For Queen and countrys sake, as a true soldier.
Boy, that doth honour unto our poor house.'

But when returned our regiment from the war,
My companys captain, colonel in command,
Now, for our senior officers had been killed ;
Spake for me ; and I a sergeant doorkeepers stool,
Obtained in London, at that Board of War ;

THE CLIFFS

Where two years ere, I 'd listed for a soldier ;
When I, a red-haired youth, from Walsingham ;
Came driving up, by the waysides, two horn-beasts,
For Smithfield Market. Once I 'd saved his life ;
When, by night-sortie, we 'd been driven out
From our trench-head. Had clubbed him with
butt-end,

A monstrous Russian ; and he swooned on ground.
I him heaved, as I 'd learned to heave an hurt
ewe :

Those sometimes fall in ditches ; and a shepherd
Has oft ado enow to lift, and set,
The best he can, their wrung sides and wrenched
bones.

I Captain Miles bare, hitcht on my strong back ;
And turning oft my face, still fenced us both,
With bayonet ; and thus safe, at end, him brought,
Where he revived, within our British lines.

His mother, Lady Miles, (the colonel died,
Within a while, of some internal hurt,)
Did send me each year, in memory of him, ten
pounds,
At Christmas, with her blessing, till her death.

I come to London, Makepeace took to wife :
Nor me, a cripple now, would she forsake.

THE CLIFFS

We 'd sweethearts been, from children, ere the war ;
When we together, from nigh cottage doors,
Raced to dayschool together, and played home.

In London, were then born to us five sons.
We bred them up to fear God, and to serve
Their Queen and England : All our boys were
soldiers.

We 've seen Queens medals shine on their young
breasts.

Of such have we till now, father and sons,
Betwixt us all, as nigh as I may mind,
Seventeen ; with more than thirty battle-clasps.

Two fallen, of our brave boys, be in the wars,
For Englands Right. 'Those died well, God be
thanked !

Since all must die, we would, for sons of ours,
No better death. Five orphelings those left to us :
Wherefore, though old now and wellnigh past
service,

I make a shift, to keep sheep on these walks ;
Where I and Makepeace bides in the old cote.
Our third son, Rafe, won last year, the Queens cross,
For valour ; that 's the soldiers highest honour.
Rafe saved his comrade, and his officer.

But I see risen the Shepherds' Morning Star.

THE CLIFFS

'T is then the ewes, that are in milk, stand up,
To feed ; and I moun to them, at the troughs.

I heard, now seaward, somewhat in the air,
Like beating distant floats of paddleship ;
Not that thick whiss and rushing, of fowls' flight,
Each falling and renewing of the leaf ;
O'er seas, twixt Hollands Coast and Claybourne
cliff.

Under thick scudding wrack, though she's to-
night
Nigh full, the moon doth cast so scarce a light ;
That hardly I find my path ; though it have marked
The coastguard, with white scars, longs the seas
cliff.

What see I a flitting shadow, that is cast
On the night skies ! I would these clouds were
brushed
Once, from her bayonet-bright, high-burnished
face.

I'm wont to perilous ways and doubtful nights :
There's many I've in them trenches wrought and
watched.

Ah Lord of Glory ! Thou that all beholdest,
From starry heavens yonder mighty steep ;
Beseech Thee, I yet some soldiers deed might work,

THE CLIFFS

That were my blood for England, when I pass !

Again ! like some thin, screaming, threshing
sound,

I heard ; and Ball, our dog, howled, mongst the ewes.

A shepherd should not bide long from his fold !

Old age, they say, is tardy and garrulous ;

As is the starling, that must still be pattering

On a sheeps wool. Men tell me, I 'm heard to talk

Much with myself. Ah well ! I 've no one else

To speak with in the field, save Him alone

Who sits on High, and rules this infinite night.

Though likely it be, an old head may fare light,
Sometimes for lack of sleep ; there 's naught can
make

Old soldiers heart cold ; though 't be, at the cliff

Here, chill to-night, in John my dead sons cloak.

*(The old man claps his arms. A new rushing sound is
heard aloft.)*

HOBBE. Ha, what do I hear, this humming in the
air ?

(He stands and listens attentively.)

What see I on height ? and now I hear mens
voices.

(An Aerostat is seen descending from the skies.)

They're foreign too ! O what balloon-like hovering

THE CLIFFS

Thing is this, that on our sea-cliff lights ?

'T is likest that those should mean no good by us.

I'll, like a skirmisher, shroud me in this briar bush.

(HOBBE *crouches in the bush : voices are heard in the air approaching.*)

FIRST VOICE. *Herr Baron*, right beneath us wide cliff lies !

SECOND VOICE. Cliff-brow of *perfid*e Albion ! so alight.

FIRST VOICE. Avast, Hans ! let down anchor on the grass.

(*The balloon is brought down. Two foreign militaires, with their mechanician, circumspectly alight. He beats in pickets, whilst they hold down the airship. They bind her thereto, and make all fast with ropes.*)

BARON. *Herr Ingenieur*, we sooner than we looked for, Here touch to shore. I like well this first luck ;
Sailing by only compass, in the dark.

INGENIEUR. The airship, as her builder her designed,
Flies true, though light and staunchly rides the wind.
Not without lifes fear, was at first her course ;
Whilst low and thwart land currents hindered us ;
And somewhiles tossed.

BAR. So covert is the night,
There's not moonlight enough, to view this coast ;

THE CLIFFS

Where our descent, which shall confound the World,
Determined is to-morrow, to begin.

ING. (*looking upon an open sheet in his hands.*) This
Staff-Karte shows, here lies much open heath.

BAR. Where stirs not even a *mus ridiculus*.

Well, we must patient time : there 's naught for us,
But sitting down, to watch the labouring moon,
That wades this scudding wrack. We may not
even

Light strike to our *zigarren* here, to refresh us.

ING. That were gainst regulations for night service.

BAR. To drive the nightlong hours we may discourse,
At our *belle aise*.

ING. Shall we sit on this grass ?

BAR. 'T is well enough.

(*They sit down.*)

ING. Save the chill, damp nights breath,
Which hovers from waves' face, that we have passed ;
This melancholy surge, with the reflux
Of seas salt tide, down on those desolate rocks ; . . .

BAR. All still is as a graveyard at midnight !

ING. Yet can it be, the Englanders keep no watch,
Save in few towers and lightships on their Coast ?
Like to rich city, without gates and walls,
Or garrison ; midst strong, treacherous enemies !

THE CLIFFS

No man, except he were a natural sot,
Doth by the common highway leave his purse.

BAR. Well, those do more ; they leave without defence
(Though would safeguard their own, the very
beasts !)

Their natural Land, and all therein to loss ;
And are become thus the World's laughing stock.

ING. Is there no fear, that we might be surprised,
By some armed watch ?

BAR. *Nein*, none : there be none such.

Are not to Petticoat Island we arrived ?

Where so men womanised and effeminate grown
Are, (that to flickering of their womens eyes,
Do set their wits ;) that they, we hear, send home
Their very watchhounds, which they softly rear,
On sugarbread and milksop, now to sleep. ;

ING. They dread then no outlandish enemies ?

BAR. They are too slow of heart and Island-bred.

Confusion born is in the English blood.

As clouds in Britains skies : besides they deem

It their prerogative to excel, with small

Endeavour : they live thus in blind illusions,

And evil counseled ; seeing their Parliament men

Do, each side honestly, wellnigh anything

So they may votes win. Who set over them,

THE CLIFFS

Their pennywise fool-hardy mandarins,
Will make believe, (for votes too !) they, by shifts,
Spare hundred thousand marks ; though for that
sot

Few pounds saved ; like the churl, who would not
paint

His house till its nigh falling, certain is,
They must tomorrow panic-millions spend ;
Not nine, but ten times ninety-fold that they
saved ;

To their undoing, and grossly them misspend.
Meanwhile their State 's in danger to be lost.

Blinded by Providence, that it seems loves us !
Their Admiralty, in the last year, have disbanded
Their last reserve the Coastguard : now they could
not

Supply the waste of war, in one sea-fleet.

Were aught to go at first against our warships,
We 've hundred thousand, to repair our loss ;
Men, which have passed their seetime in war-
service.

You 'll find no docks, on all East Englands Coast ;
Whereas they might refit one battered Dread-
nought !

Whence those should fall an easy prey to us,

THE CLIFFS

In second fight : thus holds our *Generalstaff* !

ING. Yet, have they not the greatest merchant navy ?

BAR. Ships, but all too few seamen of their own :

Nor are their untrained merchant-seafolk apt,

To serve in warships : and so those sunk up

Are in all swinish vices of the ports,

They 're quite unfit to render stedfast service.

Their merchants sooner wage now foreign shipfolk,

As of more temperate living and more trust.

Nay, and even, in English waters, foreign pilots

They 'll hire to guide their ships.

ING. That 's *wondersworth* !

But hold they not a sovereignty of seas ?

BAR. Not in the opinion of our *Generalstaff*.

English warships, like merchant vessels ride,

By night-time careless, on seas open water ;

Their stems, sterns, steering-gear without defence,

Gainst sudden offence of enemy submarines.

Those cannot see you, and they cannot shoot ;

Their guns bear not so low. To fight by night,

Their gunners be untaught. We in óne night might

Sink, by surprise, the strength of Britains war-

fleets.

ING. Is their marine artillery of none account ?

BAR. When last time those contended on high seas,

THE CLIFFS

Three British frigates did not once the frigate,
To each opposed, a ship of equal force,
Hit with great shot ; and those were Nelsons ships,
Nine only years after Trafalgars fight !

They six times fought, and five times had the worse :
'T is so recorded in our Service books.

I might tell you the names of all twelve frigates,
Offhand ; the artillery is mine arm.

ING. How is

Decayed so great seafaring Nation thus ?

BAR. They 're governed now, by loose-brained dema-
gogues :

The dusty feet rule England, not the head.
All carries now the irrational Parliament vote,
Of a brain-addled crooked populace.

Part their sheeplike conditions be in fault.

Each will-with-the-wisp, that hovers from their
mist,

Through fens, through briars, over strange steeps
and floods,

This soul-blind people follow like a flock.

Whereúnto you might add their native fog
Of misbegotten language. 'T is a speech,

Wherein can none think clearly. Were Persianian
Spéech, full as theirs, of islands dark *enclaves*,

THE CLIFFS

Of all tongues spoken with us, since the Stone Age ;
Where should even we be ? Whilst he speaks, may
your

Unschool'd Cimmerian Englander, hardly more
Than a bare glimmering of the meaning have
Of his half-shut lips' confused utterance.

ING. That's noteworthy ! Words, all Philosophy
showeth,

Be such as ciphers are, the elements ;
Whereof each human soul builds from the Earth,
The mathematic fabric of his thoughts.

Natheless, we read, their fathers manly fought,
By land and seas ; and vanquished Buonaparte.

BAR. 'T is on this fond persuasion, they yet live ;
And hug themselves, for that their fathers wrought ;
Being so themselves degenerate and decayed,
In mind and manhood, they are good for naught,
Poltroons, but games ; they cease to handle arms.
Each third man you shall see sling on his back,
That seems a rifle : if you nigher look,
You'll find 't is but some bag of toys, of sticks !

Though they fool-hardy courage have enough,
To break their necks in games, which they call
Sport ;

(*Magnifique !* but that will not bear the touch

THE CLIFFS

Of hard reality ;) they all national spirit
Of patriots lack, to put their bubbling lives,
To any small displeasure, to bear arms,
For Countrys sake. See, how few on them take
First duty of every loyal citizen male,
Being grown to his full age, to uphold England !

Dead is all *Patriotismus* in their breasts,
Grown out of fashion now, quite obsolete.
Those know not heavens high pure religious fire !
Which, in the hardest of extremities,
Can arm mans breast, with constant fortitude.
In few of them, that sacred flame doth burn ;
Nor any heart consume. Fetish it is,
These men-of-butter say, of lower races !

ING. A picture old, in my book-chamber, hangs,
Of great Trafalgars fight.

BAR. Trafalgar, *ppf!*

Have you ne'er heard, how Frenchmen manned
their fleet,

With *café garçons*, cobblers, tailors, pressed ;
Men hardly men, with other of like sort.
I 've somewhere read, they monkeys used aloft,
From Sénégal : they themselves might hardly set
Or take in sail ; nor navigate great ships.
If I lie not too much, was found *Villeneuve*,

THE CLIFFS

At death, to be a woman. Yet the French
Have sunk, before these cliffs, an English fleet.
Hollanders sailed up Thames mouth, and fired their
ships.

Four days those wrought, (indelible disgrace !)
Their wills in England. Ruyters cannon speak
Heard rumbling Londons craven populace.

ING. Yet was not Waterloos victory very great ?

BAR. The stomach all day ached of Buonaparte :

When he began, tormented him the flux ;

A windmill of thick pain whirled in his head :

Might only, at an hand-gallop, charge his horse,

Through mire of the late rain. With powder wet,

Nor guns nor Frenchmens muskets, would go off !

The strength of Wellingtons part were Persic
soldiers,

That held *Haye Sainte* ; those buoyed the English
up :

Victory that day, with Persic blood was bought.

And Waterloo was but one of many fields ;

Wherein were manifold feats more glorious,

Of arms, achieved : thus holds our Generalstaff.

We do allow the kilted men stood fast :

The Irish caterans Buonaparte could not daunt.

Were beardless children the most Englishmen.

THE CLIFFS

Of four and twenty thousand, eighteen thousand
Were *Landwehr*¹ soldiers.

ING. The brave English lads!

BAR. Methinks, you too much praise our adversaries.

ING. I praise them, *ja!* My much loved mother was
An Englishwoman; nor her like again
Shall I see, under this star-bent of heaven!

Yet I'll perform my military oath,

As to my Prince. But who live now in England;
Be not they their sons' sons' sons' sons, which fought
At Crécy, at Poitiers; that won Agincourt;
And tennis played through fair wide fields of France?

BAR. Those got the better, with their feathered sticks,
As children use; they stole those victories:
Scant honour to them, that not manhood had,
To close in fight. Seld, even on the high seas,
Have Englanders laid aboard their enemies.

ING. Fought they not mainly with the Muskovite?

BAR. The French fought well; in our staff-books the
English,

(Save for some foolish charge!) are hardly mentioned.
Persians, passed few years, o'erfought the French;
So England, by our arms, shall be subdued;
Whose State much like is to her crumbling cliffs.

¹ Militia.

THE CLIFFS

Shall be of these Phœnicians, which have spoiled
The World before, immense our booty. It was
With such brave thought, in London, Blucher
smiled ;

(When her rich citizens cast all up their caps,
To him, with hurrahs !) closely in his sleeve ;
Foreseeing, what should one day be done by us.

ING. Should not we render evil, for their good ?

(We 've nothing seen from them, I think, but good !)
Helped they not us, in Friedrichs wars, and since ?
Else, had we surely had, till now, the worse !
Made they not us the equals of themselves,
In all their Colonies ? still regarding us
As their nigh kinsfolk. What cause then, I ask,
Have we against them ?

BAR. That have those too much ;

And we Persanians not enough. Usurp
Faint Englanders the World ! An old saw saith,
Force, is Gods law of Nations on the Earth.

ING. What of our Treaties ?

BAR. So our power is great ;

That for no dusty treaties need we spare.
We are our fathers' fathers ; so exceed
We them in virtue : the dead ages past,
If they might rise, should testify for us.

THE CLIFFS

This age that is, is ours : Arms, Riches, Arts ;
These be Persian gods, which prosper us ;
And that shall give us Empire of the Earth.
Consider, what today the Englanders are,
Those pale Provincials of our Continent,
Nourished of fond illusions ! a byword
Amongst all Nations. We shall shortly win
Their vast possessions ; Islands, Continents :
We 'll take all that is offered to our hands.

ING. I 've read of Rome and Carthage : but are
Carthage

They, and we Rome ? as loudly all day declare
Our spectacled pedants.

BAR. Thereof shall dark War,
That dread begins tonight, be Arbiter !

ING. Can this proud Island Nation, once so stout,
Make only slight resistance to our arms ?

BAR. An handfull of Dutch peasants was too much,
Have we not lately seen, for Britains army.
Too long have these faint Englanders cried, *Chuck-
Chuck !*

Over vast cockpit of the World ; that live
By our longsufferance, like the very Turk.

ING. Some dream, they 'll indemoniately fight ;
Dispute the fate of England, inch by inch.

THE CLIFFS

BAR. Even that should hardly avail them : force un-
taught

Is easily broken. Jews, that frenziedly fought,
Coveting, as heavens riches, wounds and death,
Saved not Jerusalem. Impious Romans laughed,
Ate pork and beat them ! Shall not likewise pass
Britain, found not World-worthy ; and by us
Her Empire be destroyed. I have myself,
Among them lived, Hanse Consul, certain years ;
And have thus felt their pulse. After six days ;
When our highsea fleet shall have sunk their
fleets,

And shall our mines have sealed their entry-ports ;
When their home shires our army corps possess :
Will clamour Englands abject multitude,
(Since all with them is less than daily food,
Nor reck such, who them rule, so they eat bread !)
To king and parliament, for wage and bread :
And willy-nilly, them compel make peace ;
Such then, as we, their conquerors, will concede :
That 's annexation or indemnity.

ING. What ?

BAR. Ten hundred millions ; all the wealth of England,
That 's ours by Conquest : we 'll them bleed to
death.

THE CLIFFS

Being heirs then of her merchandise ; which was
what

They had besides ; (for Britain in herself
Is, without rich mens substance, a poor Land !)
Persania shall be great indeed henceforth.

Bethink you ; how we easily shall them tame
And speedily. There 's not corn enough in stack,
In barn, nor field ; bread-stuff in chandlers' stocks
Within their shores, to last them out three weeks !
Of all the grain which these quaint Englanders eat,
Five-sixths they fetch, from foreign soil, in ships.
This cut off ; and it is the Nations death,
Within few days ; whose brainsick politicians
Have seen the fields to mourn and husbandmen
Go lean and pale and broken, with light heart ;
And though thereby the Peoples root did perish.

All townlings now, too soft be grown their hands,
To guide the plough and break a stubborn glebe ;
Which labour maketh hardy and strong men,
To keep a land against her enemies.

The fourth day of our Invasion, you shall see
Men who bare arms surrender every hour,
As were they taught to do, in their Dutch War.

ING. Were taught ? *Ach, himmel!* That is ascer-
tained ?

THE CLIFFS

BAR. Well Wilhelm, of the Uhlans, told me so,
My cousin, a keen soldier, whom you know.
He one years foreign-service leave obtained ;
And sailed to fight against the British army,
On the Boer staff : and almost Wilhelm won,
I had it from his lips, himself alone,
The town of Aldaymist.

ING. When he came home,
Was not your Cousin blamed ?

BAR. Blamed ? *au contraire !*

Wilhelm received a laughing reprimand ;
And that promotion, which he 'd long looked for.

When we 've deported their surrendered men,
There 'll little be left over to oppose
Our arms. What can few do, in whom extinct
'S all citizen virtue ; when great foreign armies,
Of war-trained soldiers, well-prepared to this,
They see march in their highways, fields and streets.

Their streets, that torrents were of wheels, which
roared

Today with traffic, shall be desolate.

The therein hurrying footway throngs shall cease :
All thoroughfares shall be silent as the night !

Our soaring airships' fleet, which can with winds
Contend, nor fears waves' watery wilderness,

THE CLIFFS

Beneath ; ere our first transports may arrive,
Wherein an expeditionary force
Embarked ; shall seize these cliffs. The British
warfleets,

Combined, (our Intelligence is,) lie four days West
From Irelands Coast ; where last week they were
sent,

To play war games, and patrol their trade-routes ;
Wherein already is good part consumed
Of all their ammunition, coal and victual.

Be equal, (*ja*, at least !) to theirs our warships ;
Our crews not less than theirs. Our officers are,
We think, one better. Twixt our forces landed,
And Englands diseased army of Lilliput,
Fourth segment of Earths round wide compass lies.

ING. What of that *Truce-of-God*, for thirty years,
Which last month was concluded at the Hague ?
And through the World proclaimed ; whereto their
hands

And seals, the ambassadors set of every Nation !

BAR. We are assured, by our alliances.

'T was long the play of our *Weltpolitik*,
To exploit the eternal enmity of the French,
Gainst them in Africa, and in Further Asia
The Muskovite : bút that 's now, like an old cloak,

THE CLIFFS

Worn too threadbare, to keep the weather out.

N'importe ! Persania hath in herself such force,
We fear none under heaven, and can cast sops
To all neutral Nations, of our great Conquest.
Will the Worlds Peoples, which have longtime hated
This pirate Island Nation, open wide,
To mocking scornful laughter, then their mouths.

They 'll pain them, for insuperable mirth,
To hold their quaking sides, and lose first breath.
Nine days will this mad World scoff on ; and then,
As cloyed, revert unto his former course.

Have not we, by the sword, won all our State ?
We 'll keep it and enlarge it by the sword !

ING. And yet behoves us, not too much to boast :

Deep was the humiliation of our arms.

(Great Friederichs arms !) in Friedrich Wilhelms
days.

In one week was our more than equal force,
Driven from the field, in ignominious flight.
Surrendered, at first summons of few horse,
Our border fortresses. Tamely even laid
Down whole divisions their inglorious arms.
Napoleon, (with good reason !) held us cheap.
Our Eagle was, he said, a double-faced
Cringing rapacious vulture : so possessed

THE CLIFFS

A long low-hearted slumber had all hearts.

'T was *Gottlieb Fichte* roused our sires from sleep ;
And fired the generous spirits of the Lands youth,
To serve, with the whole impulse of the Nation,
The common welfare. Was Persania made
One manhood thus ; that marched great *Tugend-*
bund,¹

To conquer Freedom, gainst all enemies.

BAR. Burned in our fathers a great moral force,
An high, a passionate resolve, Ideals,
Enthusiasmus ! Such find hardly place,
In English hearts !

ING. Were their whole youth, as ours,
Taught citizen manhood, how to handle arms,
Our enterprise should be hopeless.

BAR. Well, I grant,
That to the brainsick fury of their factions,
(Which rage, like frantic women in the picture,)
We are much beholden : whilst each one, gainst
other,
Shrieks injuries, and they cat-like mongst them
strive,
Their State stands still !

ING. Though it be an house divided

¹ *League of Virtue.*

THE CLIFFS

Against itself ; yet there 's a Providence
Works for them hitherto.

BAR. Even as there is,

For fools and children : their best Providence,
Have been these cliffs and wild wave-rows, till now ;
Waves that have we tonight overflown and passed.

Our folk grows daily, and lacks now Colonies :
Wherefore must vast Australien soon be ours ;
In Europe must the Netherlands fall to us.
(That shall enhance to heaven, our Naval Force !)
With all her oversea great Dependencies.

South Africa shall be ours too. Of late years,
Our Rulers it have coveted ; with the there-
To joining, settlements of old effete States.
The Nile Lands then ; and when Time is more ripe,
By right derived from Charlemagne to us ;
We 'll challenge France, North Italy, Sicily and
Spain ;

Ja, and Barbary, that 's so wide, from East to West ;
By virtue of those old conquests of our arms,
Shall all these be Persania, in the new maps.

As for this Isle, it plainly appertains,
To our Imperial Crown, by antique right.
Came not her *Sachsen* out of our *Alt-Sachsen* ?
Persania Irredenta yet remains ;

THE CLIFFS

The *Eastriche* then and Baltic Provinces.

There are moreover certain doubtful States,
Ungarn, three Scandinavias, and the rest.

In fine, shall all be ours to Moskow gates.

We hoped for Turkey ; there 's great warlike stuff
In Turkey, more than fifty myriad soldiers ;
Little Asien 's a sweet sugarplum in that cake :
And Mesopotamien too might go with us.
Beyond lies Persien, and great Indiens Gulf.

Besides, we would they 'd join our Triple League :
But Turkey 's *hareem*-cry of her *beaux-yeux*.
We 've barely gotten her goodwill, till now.
Yet having that, it is a Key of State.

Be, as be may ; it costs no more to us
Than promises ; and that 's only paper-breath.
To us all 's one, Muslem or Galilean ;
So there 's but profit or *Welt-politik* in it.
And by their gates our road to Delhi lies.

ING. Were you not too much leaving out of count,
This Island Peoples chivalrous allies ;
Their counterpart, on yond side of the Earth ?
Would those look on, to hear our *jas* and *neins*,
In the Still Sea ? which lately approved themselves
Insuperable, whether by land or sea.

Was it not Moltke said ? Were but a sheep-

THE CLIFFS

Flock, to set gainst us all their hard horned fronts
We might, though soldiers, find it hard enough,
To overthrow them. How then, with men-rocks,
Harder than granite, souls that fear no death,
Should we contend ; whose only dread in death,
Is, to be found less than their fathers' spirits,
In warlike worth ! Are they content, for this,
Each one, far from loved home, to fall, to rot ;
In grave, or without grave ; sport of wild winds,
And teeth of evil beasts, in hostile earth :
Wounds, sickness, pain, endure before their deaths !

What is there, can be matched with their true
worth !

Where were swash-buckler brags, big bully-strut,
Mustachios at full cock, tall beer-steeped flesh,
Brave clink of sabres, spurs, in Linden street ;
Or warlike fripperics ; whereat the World laughs ?

In a new Age, and that 's not now far off,
As many think, Europa, now our boast,
Must in her turn, recede to second place.

The New Worlds pivot shall be set up midst
Still Ocean then, twixt great Pacific States !

BAR. (*stretching himself and yawning.*) *Ja*, shall our
aftercomers see to this !

Meanwhile 't is a great hour since we did eat,

THE CLIFFS

Midst foggy skies ; and here an air breathes fresh.

(*To their chauffeur.*)

Lift from the basket Hans, our *proviand-sack*.

(HANS brings them their victual ; and sets it before them.

They begin to eat.)

BAR. Here 's Lieútenant Weise, in juice of Rhenish grapes,

A long great health, to our high Enterprise !

We first possession take of Englands cliffs ;

Englands proud cliffs !

(*They clink beakers.*)

What see I, flames at sea ?

Or some reflection it might be, of lightning.

(*They rise, still eating ; and move towards the cliff-brink.*)

LIEUT. W. Are those not rockets, thrown up in the skies ?

Full-like some *fantasia* of passing yacht.

BAR. The hour is late for that. A searchlight casts,

See, beams like comets' tails, up, in the night !

LIEUT. W. Can this, *mein Gott* ! be, in tragedy of the War,

First battle gleam ?

BAR. In my binocular,

By Engelmann of Leipsic, which *à merveille*,

THE CLIFFS

Defines, I see two masts, from time to time,
Of hull-down ship, with heavy fighting tops.

LIEUT. W. It might then be some Frenchman. Strange
is, that

We at *séa* saw no ships lights, in time we passed.

BAR. A likely guess of yours ! How she cocquettes,
Like boy with magic-lantern, whirling beams !

LIEUT. W. Yet, what should be a Frenchman doing
thus ?

BAR. They may have lent her, (Britain 's now so poor !)
Some warship as they lent her millions ere.
I have it ! they were signalling, to Mars ;
To warn them, should Britannia, from Worlds face,
Anon be blotted !

LIEUT. W. Their light 's suddenly quenched.

BAR. Like that new star, which blazed up few years
past,

Nulli secundus ! We suppose there was
Some fire-brigade in heaven, that put it out.

(They return to eat and drink.)

Why Friend, do you so silent pensive sit ?
What so misgives that mathematic mind
Of yours ; that 's winged with abstruse sciences ?
Too much thought, like to a corroding flame,
Drinks up the sap of life.

THE CLIFFS

LIEUT. W. Of manifold things

I must be musing still ; and never come
To any fine ; the whole 's insoluble.

From the foundation of the World have men ;
Since they had conscious mind, with utterance ;
whence

Those laid first knowledge up, debated them,
Without conclusion. I do ask myself ;

What is our human orphan littleness ?

To weigh with yonder starbright infinite Gulf ;
This inconceivable Majesty of the high heavens !

Whence that immensurable Star-frame ? yond
Frost

Of Suns ? From What ALL-PARENT it derives ;
Through never-ending years ? Whence have we
breath ;

This reasonable soul, cloaked in with flesh ?
Warm pulsing flesh ! And when mans kind is dead ;
Cold too this living world, dead, void and ended ;
Shall, (far transcending our now living thought,)
It hang unchanged, and everlasting still !

BAR. Lief Friend, take orders : all Persepolis

Shall flow to hear your saws, in the *Domkirche*.

LIEUT. W. Aye, I wonder, and do oftwhiles ask my-
self ;

THE CLIFFS

If not the natural piety should revolt
Of our peace-loving, homely, honest folk ?
Can rightly one Persianian heart approve,
This violent new aggression of our arms ?

BAR. *Lèse majesté*, in Persania, so treads down
The public conscience, that no common voice
It hath.

LIEUT. W. And they, with calumnies, have been
nursed.

I know, how their credulity was abused,
Till men cried *pfui!* Was feigned among them, how
(In days of the Dutch War, not long ago ;)
Wrought unexampled villanies Englands soldiers :
Whereas, in every age, by sea and shore ;
English humanity hath gone before
The common *praxis* of our Continent.

Not only did men hazard their own lives
(Their traitorous foes, as many as held up hands,
To save !) but they made haste, to bind their
wounds.

Like brothers, those them fed and freely clothed ;
Though went they very bare of all themselves.

Before aught, womens honour they observed :
Wives, maidens, children of their brutish enemies,
They two years fostered, in the safety camps,

THE CLIFFS

Whilst war continued. England gave them schools,
Aye, and portioned them, when that bitter strife
was ended :

They were not to their own like generous !

BAR. I own, I heard as much, from Wilhelms lips.

LIEUT. W. If there 's an Eye in heaven, if there 's an
Ear,

I dread must fall one day a Nemesis,
For all this, on us !

BAR. Well, I 'm a plain soldier ;

And my belief is only in the mailed fist.

Besides our shallow *Predigers* shall then preach,
Nay, if any lack persuasion ; they 'll protest,
And hammer out an hundred godly texts ;
And loudly asseverate, all those make for us !

Methinks, their white be-banded vulpine throats
I see above their tubs ; and heavenward lifted,
Their feminine hands bless our war-enterprises !
Hands, that would hang, on Peace-Gods holy
walls,

More banners, from new gore-stained battle-fields.

'T is likely, as we sit here, at this night-hour,
(Englands Invasion-secret being now out ;)
Their bricky walls sound with religious hum,
Windpipes of women, men and swelling organs ;

THE CLIFFS

Chanting that GOD of PEACE, with chastened
throats :

With undersong in all their secret hearts ; . . .

ING. 'S Persania over all !

BAR. Well : *homo sum* :

That 's Kant and Hegel of our army clubs.

Each Nation is self-loving as a man !

And there 's late sprung up a new school of thought ;

Which holds, that even Religion 's in abeyance,

(And justly, as when a tiger rends his prey,)

In that a man 's in doing of a thing,

To his advancement. When that 's done and past,

And may not be undone, he can repent,

And fall to whining contrite penitence ;

Baking his two cold knees on the flagstones.

So men cheat heaven ! What, if our Rulers kept

The Christian precepts, should not our victorious

Arms long ago have fallen from their faint hands ?

We will, with them, all superstitious fears

Despise.

LIEUT. W. A piety of our common flesh,

There is ; mongst all who partake human voice,

And form and understanding have with us ;

Humanity, on the Earth ; that cannot cease !

BAR. Such may remain a matter of some doubt :

THE CLIFFS

When we 've all won, we 'll give it further thought.
Some then upstart Professor shall it handle ;
And with his new tin trumpet din the World !
As some now, of méan parts and weak júdgment, out
Of their own livers, history of Church and State
Presume to teach, not as indeed it was.

LIEUT. W. What makes today so *fade* infatuate

The Englanders ; so from their minds divorced
Their hands, and hands divided from their heads ?

BAR. *Nonchalante*, sumptuous, ignorant, strange : it is ;

Today, a moonstruck, woman-ridden race.

They see, above the dimness of their mist,

No star in heaven shine. There 's naught to
lift,

From dust, their dull eyes up to. They 've no arts,

The solace of high minds, save at third hand ;

Nor aught, whereon to stay their minds, as music.

They know no speech of any neighbour Nation,

Nor other Countrys customs, than their own.

The World to them, is this Cimmerian Isle ;

Wherein runs out dull sandglass of their lives ;

Mongst whom, there frankly none declares his mind,

In manly sort ; as freely are all men wont

To on the Continent : and lack Englanders thus

The corporate sense, community of just thought.

THE CLIFFS

Creeps sooner in these sons of Puritans' hearts,
A carping vein of impotent cynicism ;
Which passes for a pretty pocket-wit,
Mocking all right endeavour and true deeds.

Instead of speech, sounding to patriotism ;
You 'll hear most current in this Peoples mouths,
(As all that 's done among them 's like a race,)
Loose-brained, loose-tongued, irrational sporting
cant ;
Disloyal, sordid, forged, pernicious argot.

A Nation thus at variance with herself,
Undisciplined, all to patriot arms untaught ;
Can such make any serious defence,
Resistance, to the sudden immense impact
Of our warskilled, well ordered patriot State ?

Shall not the vast Persianian phalanx break,
Tread down, confound them ? Eachwhere will
be heard

Then bitter cry of disillusioned hearts,
As Spaniards, out of their Armada ships ;
Hath God forsaken us !

LIEUT. W. Then, what is it ;

Lacking war force and wanting sense of art,
Which makes today this Island Nation great !

THE CLIFFS

BAR. God wot !

LIEUT. W. Is not their Theatre highly praised ?

BAR. Brain-wasting rant, and marrow-melting plaint !

Emasculate, meretricious, void of merit.

There 's nothing National in it : that 's the last
Thing whereon Englanders nowadays set their hearts ;
The nebulous knaves !

LIEUT. W. Is not their literature great ?

BAR. Some hold it was, if something barbarous.

'T is now a putrid petrifying corse,

Soul-withering, as the Medusas head :

The voice of hunch-back Spirits and blighted hearts.

They imitate now each other, till they dwindle,

Like the images of opposed looking-glasses,

Barocco too ! to inane nothingness.

'T is nigh not credible, how they are untaught,

In their own tongue. They seem to think it hath,

Nor dignity nor honour !

LIEUT. W. Have they not

Their National Chants, as we Persanians have,

Of glorious war, and lays of gentle love ?

BAR. You 'll sooner find to please the Island mind,

(The Englanders intelligence is so low !)

Ignoble taunting songs, which they call *komisch* ;

Jigging malicious street banality ;

THE CLIFFS

Whereat all flee like hounds and show their teeth ;
But hounds should howl, to hear them in our parts.
That is the English humour, as they call it !

We call it brainless mockery, where fools laugh.

LIEUT. W. Call it their *Idiotismus* !

BAR. They being such,

A people of gamesters ; many are deadly oppressed
By their old desperate debts. That hidden need,
We exploit, to draw some to our Secret Service.

None but an Englander, *ach* ! could stoop so low.
There 's something in them servile, traitorous, base,
Exceedingly. I was in the Intelligence Service
Some while ; and I might say, we bought for gold,
Their Service Codes. Signals, in the three elements,
Can now, by day and night, be read of us.

LIEUT. W. I marvel, what it is makes them ashamed,
Of their Kings uniform, in both their Services ?

They 'll not be seen in it, save in th' hours of duty !

BAR. That 's part of the strange humour of their
Nation :

They think it shows good breeding, as do women,
That nothing seem among them to be done,
Au sérieux. Moreover hangs to this ;
That in their lower military ranks,
Desertions now are ominously rife.

THE CLIFFS

To speak but of their Navy ; Britain sent,
This last year, warships to Columbias Coast :
When by desertions of their Liberty-men,
(The most ones being good-conduct men, with
stripes

And badges ! serving with increase of pay !)

The British crews lost one man in fifteen.

LIEUT. W. That 's nigh, in every seamens mess, one
man !

BAR. They 'll their most solemn military oaths,
(For base regard of gain !) thus lightly break.

With those consorted one imperial warship,
Of ours ; whose company was eight-hundred men :
But renegade to his *devoir* was not one man.

Did no Persianian seaman so his war-
Lords uniform dishonour.

LIEUT. W. You amaze me !

But might be said, upon the English part ;
Is made comparison of unequal things.

Our ship lay in a port of foreign speech :
Our seamen conscripts, drilled out of their minds,
Hemmed and hedged-in by iron-bound Articles ;
The penalty of whose breach is civil death.

None extreme punishment the free Englishman ;
(They serve on board, as laughing Volunteers,)

THE CLIFFS

Fears : and those lay on Coast of their own kindred ;
Of customs like, and of one Mother Speech.

BAR. 'T is commonly said among them, that dead is
Th' old Service patriotism, in all sea-ranks !

The sum of all this is ; after few days,
Subject, subdued, shall Britain be proclaimed,
Of our Imperial Crown, great Island Province.

LIEUT. W. Have not we read the like of Buonaparte ?
Yet the World stands.

BAR. A fig for Buonaparte !

We are the fathers of the Worlds great future.
That 's Destiny ! Put away then all weak thoughts.
Crown we once more our beakers, and cry *Hoch* !

(They drink and cry Hoch !)

BAR. Now, shall we say the new Belief together ?
Of our Song-unions, in Persepolis.

LIEUT. W. What 's that, I heard it not ; I am from
Susa.

BAR. We chant it thus, to our full beakers' klink :

*I do believe, in one two three ; in Biz,
The father ; and in Awehelm, only son ;
And in the granite-great Persanian army.*

LIEUT. W. *Ach nein* ! That 's damnable ; treason to
high Heaven :

THE CLIFFS

Treason of treasons: (*ach*, might Heaven not hear it!)
By my Religion, I abominate it!

Must blasphemy draw down swift destruction on us.

BAR. What 's blasphemy, but vain sound-beat of mans
breath;

One of the impotent cries of the infinite

Children of life, the rustling of a leaf!

From bosom of this God-small, man-great Earth;

They rise, like airy motes, a little moment;

And ruffling in the cloud-girt element,

Have there their ending, soon almost as uttered!

LIEUT. W. We see the confines of Eternity,

From hence. (*Loud Thunder.*) Ha, thunder!

BAR. What is more in thunder,

Than in storms roar, or in brute boom of Etna:

No mind directs it; elemental blind

Eruption, rumour!

(*It thunders anew.*)

HANS, (*imitating thunders sound.*) Rumble-bumble, boom!

BAR. I 'm not afraid of thunder: have no thunder-
bolts,

From drowsing Jupiter fallen, since the Stone Age!

There 's naught, that we know of, beyond the Sun,

For man!

LIEUT. W. What gnats we are! That Sun itself,

THE CLIFFS

Fountain of Light and infinite Life, to us ;
Is but a midge, in Gods dread Universe !

Our gnat-like being crushed, what then ?

BAR. Even as

A gnat dies, so a man, for want of breath.

LIEUT. W. What of his expired breath ? Ah, there 's
the knot !

BAR. Man was, and is not : covers him again,
That old Eternity, which priests call heaven ;
From whence he sprung !

LIEUT. W. From this, once more to pass,
Unto that new *Weltpolitik* : what, I ask,
Of those young Peoples of the Mother-blood,
Of Britain, lately weaned from her great breast ;
Daughters, now Sister Nations ?

BAR. Lies the next,
Of her Sea-Colonies, eight days voyage far off.
But we Persanians, ere that week be out,
Shall, as an eggshell have crushed underfoot,
England ; and scattered her defence of warfleets.

We 'll deal then with the rest, as they arrive,
One after other. Yet our Rulers hope,
By ensample of those old Virginian States,
(Though had they sucked the Mothers vital blood,)

THE CLIFFS

Soon as their proper Interests shall be touched,
Her great-grown Daughters likewise will fall off.

The best, from Britains shores, each year ship
forth,

Seeking new happier homes, o'er seas : be left
Thus, in the Mother Land, the lees, the dregs ;
And cannot those beget the English Nation.

LIEUT. W. What of that great Worlds People, whose
confines

Are Ocean floods, once offspring of her veins ;
In whose mouths tongue of Britain Mother sounds ?
Be such not touched, by sense of kindred blood ?

BAR. We shall essay to purchase their good will,
With thing which never might belong to us.

LIEUT. W. And is the World so base ?

BAR. Your World is like

The signboard of an Inn ; that to and forth
Sways with shrill note, unto every wind that
bloweth !

What if, to keep, (more than enough for us,)
The rest ; we some of Britains great estates,
Our new and vast possessions should lop off.
Exploited, of her huge inheritance,
Might be carved out, five mighty Kaiser-States !
Is India alone surpassing great Worlds lot.

THE CLIFFS

LIEUT. W. Well, that I grant ; and I took, few years
past;

My part in th' Expedition, which sent forth
Europa against the Boxers : cause whereof
Our Eagles tiring on a Sacred Province :
There fleshed her pounces, with her crooked beak,
She would have rent it from the mangled corse.

After long voyage, when we freshwater sailors,
Past three seas and two Oceans, had disbarked,
With guns and stores and warlike ordinance ;
Unto the pontoon corps, I was attached.

BAR. Marked you not, that our soldiers there surpassed
Those of the other Nations ?

LIEUT. W. Them I saw not,
Though all were chosen men ; the rank and file,
In military worth, of other armies,
Excel : only ours, I fear there died more fast,
Of *mal du pays*, the climate, and the rest.
In warfare nothing notable we achieved.
We officers there augmented our ideas ;
Seeing the fighting force of other armies.

Were eminent, for their valour, Indias soldiers :
And when, at years end, partly were those tumults
Suppressed ; I with sick furlough, visited India.

BAR. Are they yet loyal, to the English Rule ?

THE CLIFFS

LIEUT. W. Loyal ? Her rajahs would, I am persuaded,
Whet loyal sabres, and lead forth proud armies,
To maintain Britains cause ! whereby they long
Assurance have and righteous government,
Enjoyed. Enranged, all Brothers then in arms ;
Her white-skinned and her sun-browned Aryan
warriors,

With their heroic British officers ;
(With whom, in the past ages of the World,
Few mongst the sons of men can be compared ;)
A mighty force, and not to be contemned,
Will vie in warfield, in proud battle ranks,
For Indias Emperor, gainst all adversaries.

BAR. Herr Balaam, now you bless our enemies !

LIEUT. W. (*drawing from his pocket, a paper.*) I do
remember, I 've here a friends letter.

Was this put in my hands, ere we embarked.

One lately had received it out of England.

(*The LIEUTENANT reads the letter, with difficulty, in the
moonlight.*)

‘ *Lieber Ernst* ; as I you promised, when we met,
I write from London. Here our merchandise
Doth grow and prosper. We would there were
peace :

But if not, you were best soon to begin ;

THE CLIFFS

Whilst this slow-hearted Nation 's yet unready,
Contending, mongst themselves, and with their
women.

Of this haphazard People you enquire.
They easy are to do with, and most whiles
Deal fairly by you : but if they 're once crossed,
They harder be than flint-grains. Were their sands
Knit by some frost to granite, they in War
Should be invincible. Though they 're so divided
Amongst themselves ; that Britains dry trunk seems
Tree, cleft in hundred shivers, to the ground :
They are, as the sea-waves, all one beneath.'

(A sudden clamour of sea-fowl.)

HANS, *(looking forth and imitating, with his arms, their
lifting white wings.)* Wild seamews Herren,
cleping on their nests.

(Mocking their cries.) Hîeu, hîeu ! Heb-beh-beh, beh-
beh-beh !

Some fisher bark draws by.

LIEUT. W. There 's Morningstar !

Is it not time we mount ?

HANS. Yonder I see

Rushlights, of early-rising upland folk.

LIEUT. W. Might be some hamlet, not marked on our
Karte.

THE CLIFFS

HANS. Hark Herren ; a cock shrills, *Churl-up-early,*
ho !

LIEUT. W. We of some labouring folk might be
espied,

My Captain ; and now see the moon outshines !

'T were good we return soon ; there 's not too much
Gas left in the envelope : we might chance to droop,
Else ; whence there 's none escape.

BAR. Well then to air !

LIEUT. W. Look to our ropes, Hans ; levers, rudders,
stays :

See the machine runs smoothly ; and her planes
And vans ride clear ; wherein our safety lies.

Trice our fore aeroplane, to take the wind.

*(The INGENIEUR goes forward himself, to overlook and
handle every part.)*

HANS. Ready ; as commanded !

BAR. Yet, ere we leave grass,

One last round-look, under this English moon !

Here our descent tomorrow shall begin ;

And that shall strike the mouth dumb of the World !

Here our entrenched base-camp : from hence our
march ;

Great London our objective, and the Thames.

Wide cavalry screen, and thick artillery screen.

THE CLIFFS

Enemy demoralized, driven back : wide field
searched,

Above the pitch of shot, by Zeppelins airships.

Bomb-dropping great destroyer aeroplanes.

Fifteen more fighting days ; then London falls !

Hark Lieutenant Weise ! On Nelsons monu-
ment,

Navel of London and their Empires midst ;

(Or if we 've shot down that, then on the stumps,)

I 've vowed my bottle of champagne to break ;

Or on those cur-like lions : I hope by then,

With my well-fought field heavy artillery train,

My looked-for next promotion to have won.

LIEUT. W. Shall not our airships' fleet precede the sea-
fleet ?

BAR. I do *bewonder*, that they come not yet !

They should have left, when we tonight, the grass.

LIEUT. W. There be a thousand accidents of the
wind ;

Flaws, cross and counter-currents, lifts, down-
throws.

BAR. We 've seaborne, airborne and now subsea fleets.

Look seaward ! As this moonpath o'er night waves,

Our shipway 's laid, betwixt two banks of mines ;

So knit with wires above and underneath ;

THE CLIFFS

Might hárdly a divedopper by them pass.
Shall thus our highsea fleet securely advance,
As in wide lane, and overfare to Britain.

So colourably our diplomats had the matter
Conveyed ; that till our whole sea-force was
ready ;

They lulled, on sleep of fond security ;
This, drowsing deep, foolhappy Island Nation.
Now many as theirs be our Persianian warships,
More newly and heavily armed and better found.

(LIEUT. W. *plucks and tosses up grass from his fist, to
try the force and direction of the wind.*)

LIEUT. W. The wind 's yet fair, but changing ;
Shall we part ?

BAR. Aye, and circling ; will we make now of these
parts,

The best we can, a careful reconnaissance.

Happy return then to Persepolis !

(HOBBE *rises slowly, and lets slide from him his military
cloak.*)

BAR. What stirs there in the fern ?

HANS. Herren, some hedgeswine ;

Or likely a frightsome hare turns on her form.

LIEUT. W. It might be a snake or viper of this heath !

THE CLIFFS

(HOBBE *flings suddenly out upon them. They at first recoil : then seeing him to be but an old shepherd, they stand firm.*)

HOBBE. Who goes there, who? Stand men! Am
I that snake,

That hare? I warrant, ye foreign high-flyers are
No friends, that light tonight on Englands cliffs.

Ah, had I now the pith of my first youth,
As when I fought before the Russian town,
And my bright bayonet, I would broach you and
fetch

The heathen souls, out of your sausage skins ;
And fling you from this brink. Yet, as it is,
I'll generalstaff, I'll polish you with this.

(*Taking the bar of the crome betwixt his hands, HOBBE advances to drive them back, over the cliff.*)

Some of your pestilent words, dog-English like ;
Though at my years, I'm somewhat dull of hearing,
And your much droning, like a broken-winded
Bagpipe made me dream, I understood :
I knows such, from what days the foreign legion
(But that's now long ago!) lay on our downs ;
More shame say I to Englands government !
For to keep England, whiles we were away.
But what be ye? wor those good lads enow.

THE CLIFFS

Knives and mailed-fist been cowards' terms with us ;
For murder-tools of them low foreign seafolk,
On Englands quays. Belike ye 're some of them,
Would kick an honest man beneath the belt :
That bayonet wounded soldiers on the ground !
For I may see, ye are some foreign soldiers.

(*Hustling them.*) What do ye, in my Kings
Country ? Ho ! If any
True Englishman hear me ; help me arrest these
men !

Were now my dog with me, I'd have you all
three.

(HOBBE, *approaching it, thrusts, with his crook-staff, at
the airship ; endeavouring to open a rent therein.
The BARON draws his sword.*)

LIEUT. W. (*interposing.*) Ach, nein ; ach, nein ! my
Captain : hurt not, nein !

This poor old man : but rather honour him ;
That soldier valiantly defends his Land !

HANS, (*who struggles to hold back the limping strong old
man from the balloon.*) There's Gott ! and
peril of the seas before us.

BAR. How durst thou carle, insult this uniform !
Die peasant swine ! Did any and he were but
Some drunken reeling clod, in public street,

THE CLIFFS

That bounced me, I slay him ! (*He stabs HOBBE, from the backward. The old man falls heavily forth beside the balloon.*) Twice have I done this ;

And underwent detention in a fortress,
Two or three weeks : but after came promotion.

Such be our laws *ungeschrieben* : I were else
Loath to smutch, with clowns blood, my *glanzende*
blade ;

That three most mortal duels ; (widewhere known
Those are, from Susa to Persepolis,
For swordmanship,) in this right hand, hath won ;
And mine opponents slain, all noblemen !

(*With a silken kerchief, he wipes down his blade ; and flings then the bloody cloth forth from the cliff-brink.*
LIEUT. W. *sorrowfully covers the dying Englishman with his cloak.*)

After this *contretemps*, mount we to airship !

Let us up.

LIEUT. W. Dawn cometh apacc !

BAR. And fetch a circuit :

Such our Instructions were.

LIEUT. W. Delay were dangerous.

(*They enter the balloon-basket.*)

BAR. Reach me that English flag : I 'll hang now out

THE CLIFFS

This gaudy clout. If any hap to see us,
Over the fields at dawn ; they 'll think we are
But some sky-riding, rich, mad Englishmen ;
Which take the air, that breathes on mountain-tops.

LIEUT. W. (to HANS.) Up anchor ! Set now the
machine awork !

I 'm at the helm, to bring her head to wind.

All ready ! Hew away the ropes ; cast off.

HANS. With *Gott*, I hope, to Friend !

LIEUT. W. Trim her !

HANS. Hold fast !

(The last stay is cut and from the surging aerostat, some small things are seen to fall. HOBBE, left bleeding on the heath, bye and bye raises himself upon an elbow.)

HOBBE. By spies, I 'm murdered. Is now England full
They say of such. The Nation 's sick to death ;
Like rotten flocks, with evil shepherds to them.

His steel went through me, like a bayonet thrust ;
So sharp, my God ! it ran to mine heart-root.

My days been done ; so ended father his.

As I was born, so moun I be unbore.

Death and dark grave ; what then ? eternal sleep !

This cometh to all. Howbe, thank God, I leave

After me, three stout sons, to fight for England !

THE CLIFFS

(Lifting his hands to heavens stars.) FATHER AL-
MIGHTY, EVERLASTING ! THOU,
That livest and reignest in heaven, when we lie cold ;
Those orphelings, left with Makepeace, in the cote ;
LORD, bless Thou ! Give them needful meat and
cloth !

(A celestial music.)

What holy Vision ? Music, heavenly Light !
See I and hear. I 'll close mine eyes and pass.
*(The old man sinks down in death. Thunder and
lightning.)*

PART II

*No person is born into the World, for his own sake ; but for
the COMMONWEALTHS sake.*

LATIMER.

PART II

SCENE, THE SAME; IN NIGHT VISION

(In a sea mist, which is streaming over the Cliff, there gathers form the appearance of a Temple; in whose porch stands the Sacred Image, on a pedestal, of Britannia: and in the Precinct, which is before the Temple-steps, is seen the likeness of an Altar of Incense. The walls of Britannias Temple are rent, and lean forth, as ready to fall; the courses of her building-stones are unknit. The joints of her pillars are broken and out of frame. Her Altar, cold and moss-grown, is blackened now only of the rain of heaven. Upon the altar sides, are seen graven, in partly effaced letters, RELIGION and PATRIOTISM.

Britannias helmed Image languishes, under heavy constraining boughts of a monstrous Serpent. Her august front is blindfold with a thick veil.

A great Light is seen approaching in heaven; and SIRION, divine Ruler of the Lower Universe,

THE CLIFFS

descends in a celestial radiance ; his upper parts having the form of a man : and stations upon Britannias Altar. At his either hand, alight then, upon the two flanks of the Temple-steps, two mighty EONS, endowed with golden and azure-shining wings.)

SIRION

I SIRION, breathed from bosom of HIGH GOD,
Rule His clear courses of the lower Stars ;
Ascending up, in never-ending ranks,
From infinite East, to infinite Occident :
That ever-trembling in ALMIGHTY VIEW,
Return about HIS EVERLASTING THRONE.

Under Bootes Cold, my mansion is :
Whence still, through the year-thousands, I look
down,
On Earths low dwellers, deathling feeble kin,
Of Adam, sheltering under builded roofs ;
Their harms, confusions and calamities.

I, inhabiting the high harmonies of my GOD,
Now heard an earthling cry, ascend amidst
The Signs ; and being, mongst all Gods creatures,
naught
Accóunted of, in His High all-infinite Sight,

THE CLIFFS

As small or great ; the winged celestial wheels,
Of Throne, (whereon, midst crystal-rolling spheres,
Whither my Spirit, through never-ending years,
To wend is, I as lightning glance, remove ;))
I stayed : and, to this low forwandered Round,
Clothed with thick skies and girt with ponded seas,
Made with a WORD, and marvellously adorned,
Earth-world ; that turns with wailful jarring noise ;
(Whereas, in each Reversion of the Heavens,
I once, by Gods decree, am wont to pass ;))
From the celestial brow, I stooped. Like star
Shot overthwart Earths night, I drew to pit
Corruptible of mans House, dust of the Earth :
And ferment heard therein of living breath.
Lighted my foot then on this sea-bound Cliff.

How is that Image, which her Peoples spirits
Breathed forth, blindfeld thus, darkened, foully
oppressed,

Of hell-born ERROR ! Thou BRITANNIA awake !
Soul-slaying venim on thy bosom drips,
MOTHER of NATIONS, from the Serpent jaws.

Deformed, (sleepest thou, in deadly dreaming,
thus !)

Thy Temple is ; whose builded stones be loosed :
Thine Altar cold ; thy Precinct lies defaced.

THE CLIFFS

Thine eyes, whence shone forth beams, of heavenly
light,
Are blindfeld ; and thine Isle, amidst the seas,
Britannia I behold, in looking forth,
Become a wilderness of briars, full of
Mens living corses : and from this low plot
Of ground is cry come up, of innocent blood,
In heavens ears ?

(Addressing the corse of HOBBE.)

And thou, mans son, O Flesh !
Was thine that unbound earthling soul which passed
Now by me in heaven, like to a radious breath ;
Ascending up to Gods immortal Seats,
In infinite Light ? SHEMÔL, fly, heavenly SPIRIT
Of my left hand ; and cite me to this Cliff,
Isle Britains antique TRUTH. Him shalt thou seek
Under green hills and eaves of the cleft rocks ;
Where TRUTH, long exiled, by mans kin unjust ;
With righteous elves, doth rather choose to wonne.¹

(That great wingéd EON fades from view.)

And thou YAMÎN, strong SPIRIT of my Right Hand,
Ere yet Earth-Star had being ; fly o'er Worlds Round ;
Eachwhere upholding heavens Righteousness.

(This great winged EON also fades from mortal sight.)

¹ *The Dawn in Britain*, vi. 235.

THE CLIFFS

SIRION, (*worshipping towards Heaven.*) HOLY, HOLY,
HOLY, in the HIGHEST !

FATHER of ALL, without end : I before
The footstool of the Excellency of THY GLORY,
LORD of THINE INFINITE MAJESTY, lowly fall.
ALL-POWER, ALL-LIGHT, ALL-LIFE, ALL-BEING,
ALL-BREATH ;
Which fillest the Heavens, and Earth, and Depth
beneath :
For Ever and for Ever, is THY THRONE,
Above the Heaven of heavens ; of eye unseen !

(*Re-enter SHEMÔL, leading in by the hand, Britains
TRUTH. TRUTH is seen to be an age-bent hoary
wight, of low stature ; and girt to him, with a
rushen band, his hooded mantle is wrought all of
white moss. Blear-eyed is TRUTH and wan, as long
unwont to light and air of Upper Earth.*)

TRUTH, (*prostrating himself before SIRION.*)
At Thy divine feet, Lord, that light to Earth,
As bee on lowly flower, from heavens height ;
King of the vast Abyss of starry light ;
Which we, with devout heart, behold from hence ;
That knowest the SECRET of the UNIVERSE :
I reverent fall. Why callest, High SHINING ONE,

THE CLIFFS

Thou me, from depth forth, of Worlds tombs,
tonight ?

Seldwhile now, on sun-sprinkled floor of Earth,
Which heired the human Nation, I come forth ;
Where men not cease to turn from me their face.

SIRION. How, Truth is marred Britannias Temple
thus ?

TRUTH. KNOW SHINING ONE, Lord of the Starry
paths ;

That risen thick Héll-mist, hath rained down of late,
Such covetise, malice, ignominy of self-love ;

That drowned well-nigh therein, have human spirits
Lost hope of heaven. What marvel if decayed
Be their soul-fane ! Though my eaves-dropping
elves,

That carol lightfoot on Nights dewdropped grass,
Have in these days, Great Ruler of the Spheres,
Heard light-elves' voices, from beyond the seas ;
Saying, lies in instant peril to be lost,
The State of Britain. New ambitious Nation,
Contemning every human bond and heaven,
With insolent confidence, will our Land invade.

SIRION. I may not tarry, in Worlds distempered air,
To everlasting Circuits I repair,

THE CLIFFS

Ascending up, from starry spire to spire,
Again, to height of the Celestial Sphere :
Leaving, O Truth, till I return on ground ;
To Thee, to throughly search out and enquire ;
Why these things be, which I behold in Britain.

To this end, of my Spirit, will I pour out ;
Which part is, of the eternal infinite Thought ;
From thence, on thine immortal age tonight ;
That in thine hands may be an Angels force.
Thine elves, which serve to thee ; shall gather in,
Of every kind, souls of mens sleeping Nation.
So shalt thou examine them, whilst this shadow
endures,

On Britains island soil, of the Earths night.

(Divine SIRION ascends through the night clouds.

*TRUTH, kneeling, worships towards heaven. Then,
bowed upon the ground, he whisters into a chink
of the heath sod.)*

TRUTH. What-how ! Earth-children : have ye, in
your bowers,
And undercrofts, heard all-resounding Voice,
Of holy SIRION ?

ELVES' VOICES *(from beneath)*. Father, yea ; we heard
Him ;

And trembled in our holds, beneath the Earth.

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. Arise then, ye that sleep not by moonlight :
Come hither !

(Elves begin to rise from under the sod : some break up through molehills : they gather in their kinships and companies, to Father TRUTH. Shock-haired and great-bearded little wights they are, clad in green smocks and russet frieze coats. Not a few are seen to be girded as smiths, with leathern aprons.

And first TRUTH points silent to the human dead. Elves then run all, and plucking green leaves of fern, they piously overstrewn therewith that murdered corse. So they return to TRUTH.)

TRUTH. There is fallen on me from heaven,
Like to a flame, infused in all my being :
This is that promised Power of mighty SIRION !
(Spreading forth his hands.) To you, my children,
I thereof impart.

Hie to your worksteads, pits, halks, herns, dark
rifts

Of the wild rocks, besmirched with daily smoke ;
And turn again with balances, sieve, sacks, tools ;
That pair of balances, namely, which yet stands,
In Weylands stith-house, in the crooked denes.

(Elves speed forth, in their fellowships, by twos and threes.)

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. Sprung of eternal Ray, from Heaven shot
down,

I TRUTH am one of many equal brethren ;
That dwell in Lands of Worlds wide compass round.

In Britains soil immortal I remain,
In form, like to a man : where hath my Being
His nourishment of the dew and breath of heaven.
But deathlings they, a clay-born multitude,
Their sustenance is that years fruit of the ground,
Which in their eared fields, Sun and showers bring
forth.

Earth is my dwelling-place, though born from
heaven ;
But sore it rueth me, from the ancient days ;
As through the forest paths I walk of ages ;
That of mans kindred I am still despised.
I would, to purge their minds, might read their eyes
Yond infinite building of the firmament !

I heard, in silence of the lofty Night,
Voice of an Angel, on a mountain, saying ;
This Isle should be a corpse-field and the slain
Should be her children ; and upon the rest,
That should be left, should fall a pestilence ;
And them consume : and who on mould of Britain
Hereafter dwell, should not be this Lands children !

THE CLIFFS

(The Elves' companies return ; bearing in, some a great pair of balances ; other a ladder and beams ; some push before them a barrowful of empty sacks. Some drag in an hunting-net. Many bring besoms, rakes, and shovels, in their hands ; which they cast all down then with clangor, in an heap, before their Father TRUTH.)

TRUTH. Yet turn, my trusty elves, into the night ;
These sacks again bear with you. Gather in
Them, slumbering souls ; whilst sleep mens bodies
fast.

(Elves' companies receive their sacks from the barrow elves, and pass forth. Only a few aged elves remain, standing before Father TRUTH.)

TRUTH. Small comfort had I, through Worlds ages
past.

In each I hoped, but came my fears to pass.
Crept elf-kin erst, like worms, out of dark rocks
And clay ; which flesh and bones are of Earths
mass.

Sith wild men hunters harboured, in digged pits,
And hollow craigs, and seabords of the Isle.
Prevailed then long in Britain woadstained Gauls.
Last o'er them Romans cruel conquest made :

THE CLIFFS

And age-long lay this soil in servitude.

So came men rowing, in long heathen keels,
Blue-eyed, with brazen locks and of great stature ;
Seaxan ; that gone up from their longships' boards
A-land, with arms ; it shortly all possessed.

After whom entered new manquelling swarms,
From far o'er seas ; those wasted wide and burned.
Last their proud yoke cast Normans on all necks.

Nor ever was there any little pause
Of guile, oppressions, woes and wolvish harms ;
Groanings of battle-smitten ; souls made thralls,
Homeless, undone. Then wailful widows' sighs,
Heartsore lament and orphans' cries and tears :
And wretches' crimes, for lack of bitter bread !

*(Elves' companies return, one after other ; some bearing
and some dragging in their sacks : they stand then
by them, in order as they arrive.)*

TRUTH. Elves children, to our labour ! That we
achieve

That task with speed, which SIRION laid on us.

ELVES. Strong of that Spirit, from heaven sent forth
tonight,

Is ten times, in our arms, their wonted force.

TRUTH. Set up the beams, ordain your balances,

THE CLIFFS

Prepare the weights ! (*Elves do thus.*) Bring elves
unto the proof,

Now, of your sacks. (*A sack is brought up.*) And
first whose souls be these ?

ELVES OF THE SACK. Souls we haphazard, as we leapt
forth took,

Running and skipping, in our butterfly nets ;
Some silken michers, dew-drenched, in the moon-
light,

Like draggled moths. Other like booming dors,
Were dreamers flitting, over fields and paths.

A sample Truth, our sack, we undertake,
Is of the Commons of this English Nation.

TRUTH. Hearken elves ! Among you, I appoint to stand,
At the two scales, each side our beam, true weighers,
Old Gnoffe with Tarpe. Shall Touchstone take
on him,

To deem of our quick-tripping pans at ground.

Olp, sitting at the ladders head, shall watch

The wagging tongue. Dru, thou defend mens souls :
Sparke shall accuse them.

VOICES OF THOSE ELVES, (*that take their stands thus.*)
Ready, Father TRUTH.

ELVES WEIGHERS. Goodfellows, lay hánds to 't : úp
with this first sack !

THE CLIFFS

SPARKE, (*casting his elf-scrip into the other scale.*) I hold
should turn this scale my pouch of nuts.

Nuts from a squirrels drey I pilled to eat,
With honey-combs of wild bees ; though holed the
most

And empty shales.

ELVES WEIGHERS. They are of even weight.

Those balance, as our legs do ; when we slide,
From hills, on Moonbeams, laughing to the ground !

TRUTH. Another sack ! Bring elves the lighter first.

(A sack is brought.)

ELVES OF THE SACK. In England, women first. Hop-
pocket great,

We bring you this ; yet all too light it is.

Quaint spirits of painted madams. Some bear
wings,

Glued to their shoulder-blades, of butterflies.

Others, to match the lightness of their heads,

Trick them with airy feathers.

TOUCHSTONE. The world holds,

In mine opinion, naught that 's light enough

To weigh with these.

TARPE. Prove thistle-down.

MOCKING ELVES. Say we ;

Try fickle dandy-clocks, as many as they be ;

THE CLIFFS

Tied with skeingossamer, gathered from broad downs;
That 's pearled with hoary dew, in a moonlight.

(Elves cast these things in the other scale.)

ELVES WEIGHERS. These more than countervail them.

ELVES OF THE SACK. Over the heath

As we came leaping, with this pack on our necks,
A tilt of the night air so lifted us ;

That we, borne off our feet, well-nigh were cast
Over the Cliff, and driven to sea and lost.

We must therein have bubbled forth our spirits :
Our bodies should have sunk, to seas deep ground ;
To lie with shells, cods' eyes and herring bones.

We durst almost not draw our fearful breaths,
We pained us, with one hand, to hold the grassy
Brinks ; whilst the other hastily filled our srips,
With gathered stones, to hold our heels to ground.

SPARKE. This kind is a pernicious Summer blight,
Wide wafted, to undoing of the Land.

TOUCHSTONE. There 's little in them human ; seeing
no souls

Were breathed in them from heaven, at their births.

TRUTH. My judgment is, ye puff them from this Cliff.

THE SACKS ELVES, *(puffing souls, like little bladders,
from the sacks mouth.)* Lady-birds, lady-birds ;
fly away home.

THE CLIFFS

Choose you, Puff ! whether will ye sink or swim.

(Another sack is brought.)

SPARKE. This sack is light !

TOUCHSTONE. Their very counterpart.

SPARKE. Men-madams, bully coxcombs, carpet-knights.

TOUCHSTONE. Diseases of a surfeited Commonwealth !

SPARKE. Lepers and lazars gilt :

TOUCHSTONE. Plague on them both.

SPARKE. A paralysing curse.

TOUCHSTONE. That 's a blight, this is a blast.

SPARKE. By the nightjar on his perch !

TOUCHSTONE. By the nedder in green grass !

And the poison spitting paddock :

SPARKE. Betwixt them both there 's little difference.

ELVES WEIGHERS. What will you peyse, against this
arrant draffe ?

AN ELF. This might you try, I found among the clods,
Cast clouted ploughmans shoe. Once honest toil
Stood in it.

ELVES WEIGHERS. We wot : but should that peyse too
much.

TOUCHSTONE. Try elder pith.

SPARKE. They could not weigh up that.

A MOCKER ELF. Prove daintily fetched,
For not to file our hands, in a green leaf,

THE CLIFFS

Of water-dock, some little puddle-froth :

They 've both like putrid gleams, in a slant sunlight.

SPARKE. What sayest thou Olp ? that, like to good-
wife Pertelot,

Sittest so on height.

OLP. That thou a shrews tongue hast.

Thy mouth be filled with gravel !

SPARKE. Thine with dust !

ANOTHER ELF. Cast in toads eggs, as many as they be.

A THIRD ELF. Cast

In butterfly worms, that clothe themselves with arras !

AN ELF. Cast in drone bees !

DRU. Our sisters, the wild bees,

Sleep rockt in flower-cups, on the windy heath,

This time of night : we 'll not them waken yet.

TOUCHSTONE. We wait upon thy judgment, father
Truth !

TRUTH. Ye shall, my children, spurn forth with swift
feet

These chambering capons, from the English Cliffs ;

Which do men service only by their deaths.

*(The Elves tumble over one another, in so doing. Another
sack is brought.)*

SPARKE, *(laying ear to the sack.)* What bring ye ?
souls that peep, like fledgling birds !

THE CLIFFS

ELVES OF THE SACK. It is a covey of cockerels, we have
caught ;

They ruffle it, in their dreams thus, midst the sack.
We hardly, in our wide seine, the skipjacks took ;
By the light of this Moon ! As crickets, were
Those nimble ; so the wags be of light parts.
They crow not true yet, but chepe a small argot ;
As lately being crope out of the shale.

TRUTH. A man is born soul-blind alone on ground,
Nor soon the mist is wiped from his young eyes ;
Though perilous lies before him lifes dark path,
The best, in their first springing years, be such.

AN ELF OF THE SACK, (*as a Pedlar.*) I have mockers,
witlings, gulls ;

Who will buy any ?

SPARKE. What can suchlings do ?

ELF PEDLAR. Players be some few, O,
Of fatuous games. The rest stand looking on ;
Such swarm of heads, as pebbles on sea-strand !
Daydreamers, they think Britain well might stand,
Without their putting thereto any hand.

TOUCHSTONE. What shall we prove, against these un-
ripe grigs ?

THE SACKS ELVES. They're light, as lifted up of
vapours, visions.

THE CLIFFS

AN ELF. Have here a fishers cork, yond wild waves
warped

Upon the barren verge.

ANOTHER ELF. This bladder too,

I learn to swim and fly with.

ELVES WEIGHERS. 'T is a match.

TRUTH. Such saplings I like well : of these new sets,
Shall sprout and blossom too, right English worth,
When season is. There 's stuff in it.

ELVES WEIGHERS. Up, with the sack !

THE SACKS ELVES. With, (all now !) a heave and a how,
and a rombelow !

(The sack is cast in the scale.)

OLP. *(gazing through a pair of great spectacles.)* The
tongue wags both ways of our balances.

Now those outweigh, now do they underweigh it.

TRUTH. Open elves your sacks mouth ; let them flit
forth.

(They undo the neck of the sack.)

TOUCHSTONE. Hop, skip and jump ! They 're out of
it all in a moment.

*(Another sack is brought from before the steps of the
Altar.)*

TOUCHSTONE. Seems this a sack of silk. What souls be
pent

THE CLIFFS

Therein, that so transfigure can the cloth ?

SPARKE. 'T was homely weft once, of our beaten bast.

ELVES OF THE SACK (*to TRUTH.*) KNOW, 't is a sack of
bounteous womanhood ;

And nothing light ! We reverent, on our knees,
Have these maid-mothers gathered from their beds :

For like pure they, and like sweet be to us,
Elves of pure life, under the stedfast rocks,
As holy incense : Wherefore leaned we up,

Unto Britannias Altar, their white sack.

And every one is priestess of an hearth,
Faithful in poverty, sickness and distress ;

And all day build her diligent hands the house.

TRUTH. In the holy Temple, be their souls reserved.

Are founded the strong pillars of the State,

On these wives' silent virtue : whilst there such

Remain, Isle Britain may not utterly perish.

ELVES ALL. We 'll tune our harps, under the water-
falls,

To this sweet verse !

*(Elves doff their hoods, whilst the spouses' sack is being borne
up the Temple-steps. Another sack is fetched, etc.)*

SPARKE. What rusty clouted dew-

Warped sack is this ? Have ye, through fens and
brakes,

THE CLIFFS

It haled, and by foul ways ?

THE SACKS ELVES. Herein we 've gleaned
Souls of uncertain sex ; that eat the fruit
Of others labour.

SPARKE. Out with it, Elves fork forth,
On a laystall, the rottenness of these souls ;
So might such serve to dung the common field.

TOUCHSTONE. They 're good for nothing else.

DRU. Yet might ye hap
To find some orient pearls, mongst all this waste.

TRUTH. Lack of occasion was of many such,
Not fault but the misfortune !

*(The sack being spurned forth among the Elves, is burst.
The sleeping souls that fall thereout, are swept with
besoms, upon an heap. Another sack, etc.)*

ELVES OF THE NEW SACK. We 've merchantmen stived
herein, the more be honest.

TOUCHSTONE. Seeing such doth profit them, in mens
daily traffic.

SPARKE. Yet some, by overthrows live of other mens
lives !

And some, crude groundling souls, dream only
gold.

DRU. Merchants, are they which shove forth England
most !

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. No need to peyse them : the sack 's of full weight.

(Another sack, etc.)

THE SACKS ELVES, *(wiping their brows.)* Here is an heap,
O Truth, of learned men.

Gleaned from five faculties of mens sciences.

This load was sharp and heavy on our stooped necks,
As hod of bricks.

TOUCHSTONE. Who here can letters read ?

SPARKE. That can I ; and *(looking in the sacks mouth)*
have thése, or I misread ;

(So are large-writ the labels, round their necks,)

A world of esses, after all their names.

DRU. For to seem wise !

TOUCHSTONE. And have those too long ears ?

SPARKE. Some ones might have, hid under their long
hairs.

*(Elves, bringing another sack, make a sign, to the former
Elves, that they should await them.)*

ELVES WEIGHERS. Stand by your sack, until this next is
fetched.

(The second sack is borne in.)

ELVES OF THE SECOND SACK, *(also wiping their fore-
heads.)* Heyday, our foreheads weep ; we
trickle sweat.

THE CLIFFS

We 've landed men, some heavy as clods and rocks.
We 've clergy too.

TRUTH. 'T is soothly such mens sons,
Nurtured and bred, in English faith and honour ;
That have, in time past, wrought more than have
other,
For welfare of this Nation. Now the Lands
Best fatherhood, being by lawless laws, oppressed ;
(The cockney malice of mad Parliaments,)
They taxed are out of life. Their place is taken,
At hearth and on the land, by lesser men,
(The most come up from gainful merchandise ;)
Whose first thought 's not, for honour of their
Nation.

ELVES WEIGHERS. Their weights might burst beam of
our balances.

TOUCHSTONE. Were to perpend them hard !

ELVES OF THE FORMER SACK. We 've in our sack,
Mongst diverse mingled souls, some shrill as larks,
High soaring ones ; that can weigh stars and
tides

Foresay ten thousand years after their deaths.

TRUTH. We 'll seive them presently : I TRUTH lightly
esteem

Mens rushlight wisdom, but it were a fruit

THE CLIFFS

Of golden bough, that springeth from true tree root
Of patriot worth !

(Another sack, etc.)

SPARKE. What 's in this heaving sack,

That have ye bound o'erthwart with knotted cords ?

THE SACKS ELVES. Speak with more reverence ! Know
an hour 's not passed,

Since we them sampled in mens Parliament house.

TOUCHSTONE. How sped ye there ?

AN ELF OF THE SACK. Much wind upon a bridge,
Where whirled an hundred gigs, mills, weather-
cocks,

Blew off our hoods. We came then by playfield,
Where men played battledore and shuttlecock.

Some, in blind sacks, raced tumbling on the green ;
Yet seemed them swift as fowl in flight, they ran !

Passed forth, we saw two companies strive to-
gether ;

Stretcht twixt whom was ; (pull devil, pull baker !)
A cord, which each, with glaring eyeballs, pluckt ;
To wrest it, with tough sinews, to their parts.

Was that a rusty chain, which seemed a rope ;
And nigh, for eld, through-fretted were the links :
Those links were Englands travailled ages past !

Those called their mad contention, 'Tug-of-War,

THE CLIFFS

For Britains Life! We elves turned there our backs ;
And with harms at our hearts, went in at door,
Made in a lofty wall. Was chalked thereo'er,
In Shepherds' ruddle, NATIONAL CHATTERBOX.

Entering, we marvelling view'd, on either hand,
Vote-catcher, strange devised, wide-mouthed
machines ;

That brayed, like Cyclops, with an human voice.
Then saw we hundred, hanging on a nail,
Of brazen visards. Should those much enhance
Their voice which used them. All that Chamber-
floor,

Wherein three elves unseen, we entered forth,
Was with soul-darkness filled. Who conversed there,
Did still lose some part of their better minds.

When little and little, was our sight grown
wont,

And panting breaths, to thick air of that place,
Certain man-great we saw soul-quelling moths,
Which bit souls that came in : those faded then,
Like catterpillar-crinkled leaves in Spring !
We a mighty buzzing, which we 'd heard nigh hand,
Saw now was kept of monstrous bottle flies ;
Round brazier-brim, midst the house-floor, wherein
Burned *ignis fatuus*. All their Chamber-light

THE CLIFFS

Was of that hearth ; whence heathen gold flowed
forth,

To who would dropwise gather it beneath.

Who on the first moth-eaten benches sate ;
(Which ordained are in circuit, round the fire,)
Place-hunters and slack-kneed tidewaiters were.
Thick babble throngs, the lower benches filled.
Part we, in great amaze, perceived to be
Gainsayers, that to purpose of their Lands
Undoing, are to Parliament seats returned !
Skew-eyed, wall-eyed men, venemous were the most,
Some ones bat-blind ; some even there brainsick
were.

Few mongst them all, we, of the Sacred Band,
The Nations bulwark, might, in gazing round,
Behold ; nor many rightwise English hearts.

Daydrivers, pompous, vulgar minds abounded,
Club-gallants, men-clothes-bundles, there were rife :
That for their shining hats, were there esteemed,
And for none other worth. Did such affect
To, cheek-by-jowl, with brutal Wealth consort ;
And pained them, sour, squint, condign counten-
ance,

Next their fore-rows of benchers, to maintain.

But such were spattered backward, and distained,

THE CLIFFS

To common scorn, with street election sludges !

By signs, we occult-seeing elves perceived,
That many in former lives, in hides of mules,
And wolves and asses skins had been enclosed.
Yet more had sheep been, ruckling in the fold.
Flockwise, those follow their bellweathers, where-
So those will lead still. Some had feathered birds
Been ; dottrels, owls, pies, choughs and popinjays ;
Some wasps were, some even darting dragonflies.

Midst all, we saw a gilded table set ;
And tightropes were made fast to this trapeze,
Whose higher ends hanged in their roof-tree bound.
Buoyed with puff-coats of gas, their mandarins
Could go up delicately, with long balancing poles ;
And o'er the heads dance antiques of the rest :
Was named we heard their chief one, Hodman
Blind.

Another quaint machine, we viewed beyond,
Called *Merry-wag-round* : who in the saddle sate,
Could right-about face, to his former self.
We saw such one, which his own name forgate ;
Since when he 'd, for a bravery, turned his coat.
After his own words, then he chevied fast ;
Which caught, he rent ; and greedily them did
eat.

THE CLIFFS

Whilst on those long-benched companies we yet
gazed ;

There stood young sinister Sparke up in High
Audience ;

One, that on meteward of his private vantage,
Measured all Englands Realm : what devilkins
else,

Should he reck of it : be not all men wolves ?

Wearing brass vizard, Mischief daily brayed
Forth noise, that counterfeited human speech :
For in that Babel-place, words outweigh deeds ;
And who can glose is likely to be made,
Within a throw, a Cabinet Minister.

So his midriff ached, with gluttonous insuffisance,
Of honour, yearly purses and good cheer.

Whilst such sits learning of his Accidence,
Too oft his private perverse ignorance

Costs Britain millions : it might cost disaster.

But all there 's like a dreadful nightmare dream.

Whilst *A* spends breath, *B* bubbles blows aloft,

Trifling the Nations hours, the State stands still !

TRUTH. What wonder that to such, (Ah, holy Stars !)

' Unthinkable ' any National Policy is.

ELVES WEIGHERS. Why stand ye and maze ?

TOUCHSTONE. Heave your sack, goodfellows three !

THE CLIFFS

ELVES OF THE SACK. We were thinking fast, of a running
noose.

SPARKE. An halter and high gibbet, for each one,
Which England doth confound, through evil coun-
sel !

TOUCHSTONE. Then there might be a scarcity of good
cord.

TRUTH. To ponder such, were elves to none ad-
vantage,

But ye shall shout ; shout louder than mens dreams !
*There's not weight here ; there's not here weight
enough,*

To ballast SHIP of Britains EMPIRE-STATE.

ELVES shout : *There's not here weight, etc.*

TRUTH. What would be thought of men, which a
Kings ship

Commit to novices of mean estimation ;
Whose crew nor seamanship know, nor navigation :
Whose officers could not take an observation !

ELVES OF THE SACK. We lough us double, in their
painted roof ;

Mongst bubbles, which there hanged a fathom deep.
Whilst men did nod, under their mockery hats ;
We elves, midst their worm-eaten benches skip-
ping ;

THE CLIFFS

Snatcht some chief souls, and unseen them insacked.

For all that, when such soul-reft bodies waked,
With a cold start ! their babble-tongues ceased not
From brabbling ; nor to bawl their brazen throats ;
Even when Big Bén clapt hour of black midnight.

Last, when Westminster daws, seen coming light,
(What hour is holden all-fowls' parliament,)
Begin, on their grimed twigs, to dance and crake,
And risen up from pool-waters of the Park,
Seagulls, like snowflakes, to their bridges flit,
Those soulless bodies homeward trudged to bed ;
Nor none marked in them any difference !

Of Parliament, that Grand Council of the Nation,
Such be the Works and Days !

TRUTH. Though Englands heroes,

In the Abbey vaults, sleep not an elf shot off !

ELVES OF THE SACK. We Spirit-seeing elves beheld
consuming

Fire, ready in heaven, to be hurled as lightning
Down on them. We foresee their Parliament house
Must shortly ruin. Crazy are her high walls ;
So that we elves, in laying to our ears,
Heard busy creeping, both of lime and stones.

TRUTH. Set upsidown your unthrift sack, to sleep,
As would those Britain, on their doddypates ;

THE CLIFFS

Till time when we shall bolt them in our seive.

ELVES. We 'll cribble them,

With a wanion !

OTHER ELVES. With our flails'

Good souses, we shall beat small some of them.

*(Three Elves, come hopping in with downcast looks, before
Father TRUTH ; and bearing between them but an
empty sack.)*

TOUCHSTONE. Why look ye thus, as had ye, in the
path,

Met hellish fiends ?

ELVES OF THE EMPTY SACK. We come to certain place,
Nigh where men went in to their Parliament house,
A threshold passed ; over whose lintel was
Large graven, *Imperial Military Council*,
In polished brass, (those do much affect brass !)
Imperial too 's full stately : there rings in it,
That highlooks' hautein ignorance, which imposes !

ONE OF THE NEW ELVES. Natheless I could, as in dark
palimpsest,

Read scrubbed-out word like Trechry, scored
beneath.

THE ELVES. Within, were posted notices on red walls,
Of palmistry, races, pugs, ignoble things.

THE CLIFFS

A whirling derwish, Porter at the gate,
Revolved continually. Seemed poor Bayard thus,
No moment of his life-days should go lost ;
That eddying Earth and heaven, he should stand still.

We looked ; and in blind Inner Chamber sit ;
(In part digged, like a tomb, under mens street,)
Saw Bayards Masters, at their gaming-tables.
Men, that us seemed, for salaries of their Office,
The honour and safeguard of the Mother Nation,
To jeopardy : seemed they recked not too too much,
So they themselves were saved, what might betide.

Cause of this marvel, we perceived then, was ;
That cast were their days wages in a slot ;
Which made revolve their chairs, and spin so fast ;
Those grew quite giddy and tame, which in them
sate,

Like dizzy sheep. So seemed still their turned heads
Rotate : as who long tossed at sea the world
Sees nod. And now they would to any jig,
As PERISH ENGLAND ! which might them be set,
By their paymasters, hornpipes dance apace.

Being thus confused ; one over their baise-cloth,
Sir Makebelieve Megaphone, now their spokesman
was.

Meg bare you in hand, by sophismes, to expound

THE CLIFFS

Two new rules in Ars metric, he invented
Himself had, moon-communing in the North.

First ; that is greater than its whole, a part.
Next ; that by how much men deduct, by so much,
Increased, (the buffoon cries,) is their sum total.
Then would he show them, in his crystal glasses ;
How six full moons hereafter earlier is,
Than day which called today. With infinite clack,
He is confirmed, and with his juggling tricks.

Through a side door we looked, made of pane-
glass ;
And saw new chamber of their Imagery,
Within, made like a wheel-house : and there stood
Four men, in the four corners, on their heads ;
Gazing, through binocle glasses, at few ships,
Pourtrayed upon the walls : so that each ship
Seemed twain. A fifth one upright in the midst,
Managed an optic instrument in the roof,
Called periscope ; so contrived that it reflected
The images of all other Nations' ships,
Diminished by an half. Were flathoods thus
Prepared for the dissembling politicians,
(Blotted with eye-dust,) of the British fleet !
With intent to deceive an hoodwinked Nation.

But in that gamblers' den, surprised, oppressed

THE CLIFFS

Our sense mephitic vapours. Seemed it led
Down to some heinous place, which horror is
To elves ; and made us suddenly thence revert ;
Else we had brought some of their spun-loose souls ;
To prove them in Truths righteous balances.

ELVES SMITHS. Might we once, in our crucibles, singe
their beards !

TRUTH. Even so, ye could their metal not transmute.
(*A sack, which is embellished with the noble cross-stripes
of the Union Jack, is drawn in on wheels.*)

ELVES OF THE SACK. We 're all of a sweat ! This was
a stubborn weight.

By Thunder ! We, to meddle with this sack,
Had need of pullies, purchases, levers, engines,
Wheel-tackle and hard hands. 'T is heavy as ore,
We dig out of iron rocks ; sailors' and soldiers'
Souls.

TRUTH. Mine elf children, such ones be gold-worth !
Lean to Britannias Temple-walls ; (they best
Should serve to underpin them,) this prow'd sack :
And crown with honour of undying bays.

MANY ELVES TOGETHER, (*labouring to set upright, and
remove the sack.*) We-he-hoh ; bide-how !
Now elves heave all, so-hoh !

(*Another sack, etc.*)

THE CLIFFS

ELVES OF THE NEW SACK. We in this sack have crafts-
mens souls enclosed,

That truly eat the labour of their hands ;

But tainted, with the vice of unclean speech.

Their bearded lips drop ordures, which maketh

Elves

From them depart ; that else their fellow-smiths

Would be, and teach to them without reward,

More subtle handiwork than such wot of.

And yet in these mens hearts, albeit rude,

Is art, to fashion figments of the mind,

In stone, wood, clay, iron or perduring brass,

Which lofty gazing spirits, that themselves breathed

Were from above ; of heavenly falling sparks,

Conceive.

TRUTH. Much unsound ferment in their hearts,

Is : we 'll them presently examine, in our seive.

(Another sack, etc.)

ELVES OF THE SACK. We gathered TRUTH tonight have
this last sack,

From poor mens households, in the Country-side,

Stout labourers of the field. We entered in

The cottage doors, and caught away their souls.

You might have heard them rout, a furlong off,

Weary in their heavy sleep. The ploughmen use,

THE CLIFFS

To waken to days toil, ere the first cock.

TRUTH. Wherefore said ye not children, this at erst ?

Open and let the poor day labourers forth.

It needeth not peyse them : all be of right worth.

(They loose the sacks mouth.)

Rear now ; and strongly shore your cribble up !

Pour souls out of the sacks, to this reserved :

(They do this.)

And with your besoms, sweep their mullock up,

On several heaps. So take you to your showls.

Screen now these souls !

(Elves begin to labour vehemently.)

ELVES. We 're all quite out of breath !

*(In that Elves stand, leaning upon their tools, the Night
Vision fadeth.)*

PART III

PART III

SCENE THE HEATH CLIFF: *Enter a Coastguard.*

COASTGUARD. The end is of my walk, this Idol Cliff.

I 'm in these parts a stranger, and know not,
Why they down in the village call it thus.

(He stumbles on HOBBS cloak and body.)

What man be'st thou? that sleeps here in the
night?

This is no place to sleep in, at cliff-brink;
Nor good to slumber, in a clear moonlight:
I 've known men do so, and wake lunatic.

What-how! Rouse up, rouse up! *(touching him
with his foot.)* Awake there, wake!

*(The Coastguard opens his lantern; and stoops down
to see him.)*

What see I? A bleeding corse!

He 's not done it his self; his hands been clasped
Together, like as one who prayed in 's death.

What be these here fern leaves, over him strown?

But seems me, I should know this dead white face.

THE CLIFFS

He 's Sergeant Hobbe, old shepherd on the heath :
That 's whó it is : he 's not cold yet. As I passed
Now by his pens, I missed him and methought
All was not well ; and 't is a lonelike place.

I heard his sheep dog howl too ! I were best
To shout, and show my watchmate a blue light.
He should be nigh ; here 's middest of our path.

(He shows his signal light.)

That 's him ; he shows his own ! He 's seen my
light.

I 'll hail him ; *Hoy, ahoy !*

DISTANT ANSWERING VOICE. Ahoy there, hoy !

FIRST C. Haste watchmate, hither.

SECOND C. Where art thou Halliday ? I should know
thy voice.

HALL. Hard by this briar.

SECOND C. *(approaching.)* What cheer ?

HALL. Murder, I fear.

*(Enter Second Coastguard, with his drawn cutlas,
running.)*

SECOND C. Besides us twain, who 'd be at the sea-
cliff,

At these hours ? There 's no smugglers on the
Coast ;

Nor any, in mens memory, have there been.

THE CLIFFS

HALL. Look Garland for thyself : put-down thy light
Man ; whose is this dead face ?

GARLAND. 'Tis sure enough,
Hobbe, the old shepherd. He 's rove, from his neck,
Right through, as I can see, to his dead breast.
'Tis a sword thrust like ! I 've seen many such ;
When last I was afloat, in the *Centurion*.
We cruised three year, then on the China Station :
I volunteered there for the naval police,
Ashore ; and fought in Admiral Seymours march.

HALL. 'T will soon be day ; when can we search this heath
Longs the cliff-brink ; and down to the seashore.

GARL. What with them new fast subsea-going boats ;
Might foreign spies be on and off this Coast ;
And put by night-time, on pontoons, ashore.

HALL. And yet they could not easily climb the cliffs.

GARL. Three times, waked shrieking *Spies !* Alice,
my wife,

Or I turned out : She 's Scotch, and has, I wot
Not well, what they mean by it, the *second-sight*.
She dreamed, our Station had been all afire.

HALL. (*searching round with his lantern.*) Here 's
glittering somewhat, rolled under the brier.

(*Taking it up.*) A canister ; and there 's foreign
letters on it !

THE CLIFFS

GARL. (*looking also with his lantern.*) Here 's an hacket ropes end ; that 's made fast to a stake.

No seamans knot, nor fishermans bend, look mate !
Is this on 't neither !

HALL. (*examining the rope.*) That there coloured strand,

In it, 's not English !

GARL. Here 's some newspaper,

Under poor Hobbes cloak ; and his blood-drops on it !

(*They gaze thereon, putting-to their lanterns.*)

HALL. Not English ! Shipmate, we 've, in foreign parts,

Seen suchlike crooked crawling letters oft.

There 's victuals in it ; faugh ! they 're foreign too.

GARL. Here 's some lank bottle, flung a little off.

There 's liquor yet in 't : (*He tastes.*) Small, but well enough !

The smack 's much like that smell of foreign wine-shops,

We all wot of !

HALL. Shalt, shipmate, thou now run,

Or I ? to Claybourne village telegraph office :

The Coroner and our Commander must be warned ;

And then, to fetch us help, down to our Station.

THE CLIFFS

GARL. Twelve knots I run : I raced, gainst the
Centurion,

Over a measured mile, once longs the shore,

And won ; my messmates chaired me to the water.

HALL. Well thou then run ; whilst I bide here and
watch.

*(Scene : Claybourne Village Street, before the General
Shop ; Postal and Telegraph Office. Garland now
arrives out of breath, and knocks urgently.)*

POSTMISTRESS DOWELL, *(opening her casement above.)*

Who keeps this knocking ? Please God 's not my
thatch

Afire !

GARL. Mistress, I 'm Garland of the Coastguard.

POSTM. Eigh ! I do know your speech, your Alice buys

Her things on Saturday nights here in my shop.

I 've seen you long of her.

GARL. Mistress, come down ;

And to our Captain send my urgent telegram.

There 've been one murdered on our Walk tonight.

POSTM. O la ! who 's that ?

GARL. The old shepherd, Sergeant Hobbe.

POSTM. Alack for Makepeace ! Now she 'll die for
grief ;

THE CLIFFS

So old and feeble bodied as she is.
She 's good for little, but to sit and knit
All Winter-time, beside her chimney hearth ;
And that 's for their sons' orphans ; or a-sunning
Out, on a Summers day, when it is warm,
Before the woodbine porch ; till her old mans
Come home. None aged couple have I known,
So much were, one to other, as they were.

(DOWELL *hastily claps-to her casement ; and descends
disheveled and in some disorder, in shawl and bed-
gown.*)

POSTM. (*opening her shop door.*) This office is on
Sundays closed ; and yet

I 'll send my little James, for Makepeace sake.

'T is but five little miles, through the green lanes.

(*She undoes now the door of the wooden penthouse, which
serves her for a telegraph office.*)

POSTM. (*coming forth with a paper.*) Write on this
form, whilst I go call my son.

GARL. (*repeating to himself the words, as he writes them.*)

Urgent. Commander Pakenham, Nettlesham.

This hour on Claybourne Walk, ere rose the Sun,
We, Halliday and Garland, found a murdered man,
Lay right athwart our path ; the corse not cold.
And is the dead known Sir, to both of us,

THE CLIFFS

For Sergeant Hobbe, shepherd on Claybourne
heath.

We found then searching round, some foreign
things :

A sword-thrust killed him, or the like of that
Thirled his breast bone ; there 's none here that
have such.

(DOWELL *re-enters* : *She goes out with this message and
returns soon.*)

POSTM. I 've sent my James from our back garden
gate.

Is James already sped more miles than one.

(She looks forth.)

Here 's Surgeon Newton, coming up the street ;
But slowly : he gins to be now an old man.

(Enter SURGEON NEWTON.)

POSTM. You 're stirring Sir betimes : who 's sick
tonight ?

SURGEON N. 'T is my profession ; I must sometimes
wake

And watch, whilst others sleep. John Newlands
wife

Was brought to bed ; a fair young miller 's born,
Though will, I fear, by time the lad 's grown tall,
Be little left to grind of Englands corn.

THE CLIFFS

But why look you so sadly, on this fair morrow ?

GARL. (*touching his cap.*) I think you be the Coroner,
Sir ?

SURG. What then ?

POSTM. There 've been most terrible murder on
the cliff !

Fathers and sons and daughters, all here born,
Dowells ; and bred up in the parish ; ne'er
(Nor mine own Speedwells ;) heard in hundred year,
The like of this.

SURG. A villager or a stranger ?

GARL. Sergeant Hobbe.

SURG. Th' old shepherd !

POSTM. (*wiping her eyes, with her apron.*) All the old
man loved.

SURG. I knew him little : Hobbe was never sick.

Is there presumption of this homicide ?

POSTM. (*sighing.*) He had none enemy !

GARL. We found some signs Sir ;

Footmarks and foreign things.

SURG. Well, I must in ;

And break a crust. I 've fasted long and watched ;

And yet must work : we 'll panel then the Quest.

(SURGEON NEWTON *enters his house, next door ; then he
returns to speak further from the doorstep.*)

THE CLIFFS

SURG. (*to GARLAND.*) Meanwhile you might call Ward
the constable ;

And bid him go before us to sea-cliff ;

And there await the Civil Power.

GARL. I warned Sir

The constable, as I came ; Ward 's gone already.

(Exeunt.)

POSTM. What World is this, that grows yet worse and
worse !

'T is Sabbath morn ; but that brings us no peace !

*(The Church bell rings to early Service. A few village
wives in their best cloaks, go by, with prayerbooks
in their hands. Some stay their steps, to speak with
the POSTMISTRESS. Then enter HALLIDAY, who
has been relieved by WARD at the Cliff ; bringing
somewhat in his hand. GARLAND returns soon.
Villagers begin to assemble.)*

HALL. Or ever there was light, I gan to look

Down, over the Cliff, where martins build their
nests,

In chimleys of the rocks. And there midst growth,
Of tall green rough Spring stalks, I saw these straps
Hang caught. Came Ward then ; who lent me an
hand :

THE CLIFFS

I climbed down, and this pouch found. By the
silver

Crossed cannons studded on it, we can think

It might be a foreign artillery officers case.

And hard beside it lodged a bloody cloth

Or kerchief, on a thorn : that I 've not brought.

EARLY, (*Postman.*) What 's in the case ?

HALL. This chart of Englands East Coast ;

(He draws forth and displays it.)

They 've marked all lights and soundings see, in
red :

Blue, where your finger-tip ; and that 's Clay-
bourne Gap !

EARLY. I would, I might read these church-window
letters !

HALL. There 's this too : is it not a foreign letter ?

(He shows it to them.)

EARLY. Certain a letter : twelve years I 've been
postman ;

And know a letter when I see one. Yet

I can't tell what is this.

A VILLAGER. It might be Russian :

I have a son sails thither, every year,

For hemp and tar ; should I not call him, Sir ?

HALL. They 're friends, and foes no more.

THE CLIFFS

EARLY. So much the better !

VILLAGER. We shall soon know ; for look, here comes
our Vicar !

POSTM. There 's little, that our Vicar doth not know.

(*Enter VICAR.*)

VICAR. Neighbours and Friends, good morrow !

VILLAGERS. Same to you Sir.

EARLY. Halliday have found this letter on the Cliff,
Nigh murdered Hobbe ; and we can't English it.

VICAR. 'T is tongue, I see, which godly Luther wrote.

(*Aside.*) For whose sake they have kept these monkish
letters !

But though our lives today depended on it ;
I cannot and I fear, none in these parts,
Can cónstrue it ; save some wórd stands here and
there,

As *man*, which also is the same with us.

O hardboiled brains of our school pedagogues !

That could not teach us anything to the purpose.

And reason why : they knew it not themselves.

POSTM. Have you Sir, heard the sad news ; how poor
Sergeant

Hobbe lies murdered on the Cliff, tonight ?

VICAR. Your little James did, at the vicarage gate,
A moment light, to tell me as he passed.

THE CLIFFS

John Hobbe I knew, the old Crimean veteran :
An honest neighbour ; I 'm amazed at it ;
And sorrowful too this day, for him and his.

(WIDOW PRENTICE, *going by to Church, stays her steps
amongst the women.*)

WIDOW P. Might I look on the envelope. Since last
month,

'S a widow-lady staying in my house.

Who English born, yet lives in foreign parts :
And Madame Cecily we her name pronounce.

POSTM. So see I all her letters come addressed,
With foreign postmarks to them.

WIDOW P. For the health,

As Madame told me, of her little daughter,
The hunch-back child, (by sight you all might know
her ;

That little lady, with the long-loost hair,
Like ripples, to her middle, combed down wide !)
They 're come among us, the Spring weeks to pass,
In this good air, of sea and heath and woods.

Each morrow, they walk forth, to fill their basket,
With flowers ; such as the fresh weeks now bring
forth ;

Cuckoo flower, shining celandine, goldy king-cups ;
Violets and sweet-breathed primroses, on the banks ;

THE CLIFFS

And bluebells, blowing in the thicket woods.
All these and many more they gather in,
And call them, Riches of our English Spring ;
And they, with posies, all my parlour deck.

Where they find Sun, they sit, at afternoon.
My little lady hath her frame to sketch.
You 'd think then, from her slender finger-tips ;
Which, as by inspiration, seem to move ;
(You might the light see, through that small frail
hand !)

Were landscapes born, as in a looking-glass,
On her white paper, of heath, hill and wood,
And sea and ships. The Abbey she designs,
Embellished as it is, with wallflowers bright.
Her mother hopes to sell it, for five pounds :
For though they 're liberal, they are poor of purse.

VICAR. I ofttime see them, easel, parasol
And all ; when from my study, wandered forth,
Under woodside, or by the bubbling brook,
To ease my thoughts ; or where the heavenly lark
Sings over the green corn. I too did think,
To wait on them tomorrow afternoon.

WIDOW P. NÓw as I came fórh, I heard them sing
an hymn,
With heavenly melody, in some foreign tongue.

THE CLIFFS

And I do see her coming by the path !
My little lady will to early Church :
But Madame, at this hour, still keeps her bed.
They 've foreign books too, lettered much like
this :

And I do think she might interpret it.

(*Enter MADAME CECILYS crook-backed little daughter.*)

VICAR. Goodmorrow, little lady ; and therewith
Have a priests blessing : Well, I hope we shall not
Be longer strangers. Here 's some foreign letter ;
Which widow Prentice thinks you could decipher,
(We cannot !) and might tell us, what it is.

LADYS CROOK-BACKED DAUGHTER. I will it willingly
read, if I am able.

(*He gives her the letter ; and she reads.*)

Instructions-Brief: Bureau the Generalstaff.

Brief is a letter ; that 's the head.

SURG. But what

I am afraid of is the tail of it !

MAIDEN, (*reading.*) *Ye are to make a sorrowful recon-
naissance,*

(*'Sorrowful'* means careful,) *of the Fiends' Cliff-
Coast.*

VILLAGERS. They call us fiends !

MAIDEN. 'Fiends' with them, enemies means.

THE CLIFFS

*(Reading.) And ye shall straitly observe the Landing-
place ;*

And site marked on the chart, for our base-camp.

And, if were, ye should still be undescried ;

Survieu, well as ye might, their Hinterland.

That's all unto the end.

VICAR. So have our thanks !

*(She stands back ; and presently goes on with WIDOW
PRENTICE, to Church. Villagers commune together,
with loud angry voices.)*

VICAR. Have you bluejackets sent word to your
Captain ?

GARL. We have ; and think Sir he should be here
soon.

VICAR *(to SURGEON.)* He's a changed man of late ; can
you tell why ?

SURG. I doubt, he's fallen into some melancholy,
Since his wife died. (I say it, to a clergyman,
In confidence ;) the Captain told me this :
He sees continually rise, before his face,
As hellish fiends ; wherefore he cannot smile,
By day ; nor rest when sleeps the World, by night :
Or if he sleeps, he dreams of Britains fleets
Torpedoed at their anchors. He would have
Our Island ordered, like a fighting-ship,

THE CLIFFS

That 's always cleared for action. I drove past
His house one day last week, to see a Patient ;
And called me in his sailor chauffeur servant,
To the Commander. Was the cause thereof
I found then, to be witness with a Lawyer
From Norwich, to the Captains testament.

Therein he leaves charge, (before attestation,
He read it to us ;) that should not in Britain,
Soon he thinks to be conquered, lie his bones ;
But burned, be strowed his ashes to sea waves.

VICAR. I've heard the Captain lies down with his
sword

And his revolver by him, fully clothed ;
Aye ready to leap up and lead his men,

When wars *alarms* ! which he looks for, shall sound.

SURG. He looks for 't daily !

VICAR. What see I, beyond

The poplars ?

GARL. That 's the Captains red-wheeled motor,
Flying the ensign ! He 'll be here in a trice.

(COASTGUARD COMMANDER PAKENHAM *arrives, in uni-
form. HALLIDAY and GARLAND go out, to make
their report to the CAPTAIN ; who dismounts.*)

COMMANDER. Postmistress, I must speak to London,
straight !

THE CLIFFS

POSTM. Alas, today, all offices Sir be shut.

COMM. Ha ! nightmare day, the worst of all the week ;
The most depraved and wicked : I do think
My heart will burst : there 's some great trouble
brewing.

POSTM. I 've clickt an hundred times ; I 've rung and
clickt.

I 've tried and tried again ; but all 's in vain.

La, welladay ; hów do all things contrary us !

COMM. (*aside.*) There 's some hell-fiend doth trip up
all my steps !

SURG. Today all England slumbers with the dead.

COMM. Be shut, like tombs, the Public Offices.

SURG. And all say, in their careless dumpish hearts ;
We 'll trust to Providence, and go to Church !

COMM. As for the Parliament and your public men ;
Friday them scatters, Saturday puts to flight.
Sunday 's no day ; oft Monday is half naught.
What for week-ends thus, half our year is lost.

SURG. What wonder, if the Land be so decayed ;
Such blots, such blains, such blemishes it hath !

COMM. (*to POSTM.*) Yet try again !

POSTM. Captain, there 's little hope.

The clerks be all away, and have lockt up
Their instruments ; and none is left to watch.

THE CLIFFS

Ah, if only I might, all London would I shake !
What though I lost my post for it. (*A sound is
heard within.*) Ha, it clicks !

(*She hies to her instrument.*)

POSTM. (*returning hastily with forms.*) Some one Sir,
answers Claybourne, counter-clicks.

COMM. Thank Heaven ! Despatch !

POSTM. Captain I have despatched
First warning from this Coast : so write your
message.

I 'll send it straight.

(*He writes quickly : she returns then with the message
to her instrument.*)

SURG. If any would invade us ;
Would they not choose some slack weeks end, as this ?
Were best, when a Bank-holiday 's tackt on to it,
Or a fat Christmas-tide ; when so are cloyed
Mens hearts with belly cheer and without spirit ;
That seems stand still, or wag confused the world.

COMM. We shall, some day, be taken tardy thus.

In one hour Britains Empire will be lost.

BYSTANDING VILLAGE WOMEN, (*to VICAR.*) Will there
today Sir, be none early Church ?

VICAR. All days be like, where there is holy work.
Are days and nights but of this planet Earth.

THE CLIFFS

Is all beyond Gods everlasting Day,
Of Sun and Stars. A prayer continually,
Be our lives, the righteous meaning of our hearts,
Before Him. This is, more than Law and Prophets,
GODS WILL ; whose LOVE CHRIST hath revealed to
us.

The best, Friends, that we men can do besides,
Is our dear Country, Service. For which cause
Will we not now to Church. I go put off
My scholars gown, to do my khaki on.
A Shepherd should be armed, all Scripture saith,
To ward his flock : I too have something known
Of War, in Frontier India and the Sudan ;
When three years I was chaplain, with my regiment.
Also this village might ere night be sacked,
Burned, stained with foreign outrage.

(Enter a Fisherman, in oilskins.)

FISHERMAN, *(touching his sou'wester.)* Somewhat Sir,
Most terrible vengeable-like, there's happed to-
night,
Longshore here, Parson John ; for yow 'd so have us
Poor fisher-folk name you ; what nights, long of us,
Yow 've pulled as tough an oar, as any hand
That manned our lifeboat *Hope*, in the winds
throat ;

THE CLIFFS

When we 've strived to break through, with all our
mights,

Them bitter, hollow-running, breaking surges.

I minds one black night, when yow 'd, in the peak,
Stood with our lantern, lasht to the forepost,
Midst the waves' blinding crests, beat out of breath,
All over-dasht ; still showing forth our light :
For we 'd no rockets, that time we put off,
To save men we see 'd, by the lightning flash,
Stand in them rocking masts of the ship *Margaret*.

Great wave burst over us : Fletcher was washed
out,

Sitting at the helm ; his tiller Chapman caught.
Fletcher's life-line broke. Yow took me the lamp,
Wor I bow oar. The *Hope* was luffed a moment ;
We 'd lately hoised our sail. And yow leapt out,
(Yow 'd cut your lashings :) yow Sir catcht his float.
We lugged yow Parson John, then inboard both ;
From seething Winter water, perished-like.

And I 'd walk any day three mile to Church,
And so would the more fishermen, on this Coast ;
To hear them words, that Christ puts in your
mouth.

Some of my mates and I, we 've changed our life ;
And our new smack we 've named the *Providence*.

THE CLIFFS

VICAR. Come Hulbert to the point ; for man there 's
much

This morrow on our hands.

HULB. An unco' thing ;

Is, Parson John, happed twixt the tides tonight ;

Wor never told the like of, in these parts :

Right under Claybourne Cliff. We trawled last
e'en,

On a stiff breeze, as far as Bratsham Deeps ;

When fouled our tackle anchor of old wrack ;

Which goodwhile hindered us ; so that we fetched

Not home, beating agin both tide and wind,

Till morning light. Running on our shore tack,

We were, when blazed a wonder lightning forth.

Midst thunder, which then o'er our mast-head
broke,

We heard, my mates and I, new terrible crack ;

And felt a sudden clap buffet our faces.

We heard men cry aloft ; and in that moon-
light

We looking up ; it had before been dusk,

Saw falling from the clouds, balloon-like thing ;

That burst, and in red flames, seemed sink together.

We looked ; that fell, that thudded on sand, part ;

Part dashed, the tide wor low, on the sharp rocks.

THE CLIFFS

We in the ketch brought-to, and lowered boat ;
And I and my son rowed hard in, to shore :
Where lay, with wingsails, flat as childrens kites,
Sir, tent-like heap of cordage, stays, rent stuff,
That flared on the wet ooze. We ran, and cast
On sand and slacked them flames ; and tramped them
out.

And underneath rent smouldering skirts, we found,
Midst cobweb of bent wires, machine that fumed ;
Wheels, tackle, cranks and two mens bodies dead,
Like foreign soldiers clad. Was hurled apart
A third man : he, twixt two blood-spattered rocks,
On the black weed, lay. Lord, but such a pash
Wor those (yet warm !) of bloody bursted flesh :
It wor no sight for any man to look
On, fasting. This one of their soldier-caps,
(*drawing it from his oilskin pocket*) I brought away ;
and there 's a number on it.

One of them wore a sword, and had that pierced
His Owner, through the sheath. Soon as we fetched
The Gap ; and from our moorings went ashore ;
We launched the yawl ; and six rowed back in her,
Of ours to stand by, till wor warned the Coastguard.
And I 've not been home to a bit of breakfast.
If were, as some think, spies them foreign soldiers ;

THE CLIFFS

Hath visited them the heavy Hand of God !

COMM. You fishermen have done well : as you return,
Take three men with you, from my Coastguard
Station.

Piecing together all the circumstances,
I 'm mainly of opinion, there is evidence
Of spies, this night-time, being on our Cliff Coast.
(*To the POSTMISTRESS.*) Ring up my Stations, Broom-
holt, Harlingness,

Thorpe, Weyborn Hook, the Bentlings, Stoneycliff.

POSTM. (*returning.*) I 've called them all Sir.

(*The COMMANDER goes to the telephone. The COM-
MANDERS voice is heard within.*)

COMM. That I 've oft spoken of men, is come upon us !
Double today the Look-out from the Cliffs :
And pass the hours together, under arms.

(*The COMMANDER returns.*)

COMM. There 's nothing to report ; I 've warned my
men.

They 're all connected now, by telephone.

SURG. CORONER, (*looking round, upon bystanding
Villagers.*) Know all men, by these presents ;
that to make

Inquest of John Hobbes and those Strangers'
deaths ;

THE CLIFFS

I cite, in the Kings Name, twelve men and true.

You Sirs shall with me : you, and you and you.

How many be we now ? There lack but two :

Come on my friends ; we 'll summon them, as we go.

HULB. An you 'll be ruled by me, and bide, whilst I

Eat beef, down at the Vicarage ; whereas now,

Have Parson John, he, called me home to breakfast ;

I 'd go along with you Sir, for to show

Where those fell down ; the nighest path I know,

That leads down on the shore : slack water 's now.

SURG. CORONER. You fisherman can follow on to the
Cliff,

When you are ready : the Inquest will first thither,

Where John Hobbe lies : 't is in that place we must,

Sworn depositions of the Coastguards take.

DRAWLATCH, SEXTON, (*murmuring to himself.*) To-
morrow, I moun buy me a new showl

And mattock ; for there 's now so many deaths :

And more there 's like to be, as more is born.

And if now there wor War, as some folks saith,

Death should slay thousands. More than thirty year,

Them worn old tools have served me well enow.

I know, where Hobbe to bury, by his father ;

When I was young, he wor an old old man.

Under the yew, (another buried then,)

THE CLIFFS

He lies : his coffin must by now be rotten.

Well I remember, hearing his bell toll !

I puts then always off my hat, and says
The Creed and the Lords Prayer. The like they'll do,
I know some day by me. (*To the VICAR.*) But
where shall we, Sir,

Bury those fallen in the parish, from night skies ?

They might be heathen, being foreign enemies !

VICAR. Bury, at sea-brow, in old Saint Peters Church-
yard,

Once Claybournes Church stood there ; that we
now see

A split tower, and two ivy-embraced walls.

Where sleepless sound the fretting waves, and soughs,

The empty wind, over green nameless graves ;

Whereover flies in Winter days the foam.

Aye have been buried shipwrecked strangers, there.

DRAWLATCH. Well Sir, I'm not a man to be afeared,

And yet I would not dig there all alone,

Night-time and cast earth up and rotten bones,

In the full moon. Sits on them cold skew stones,

A grave owl ; and who hears her scritch he's like

To die within the year, or not live long.

And I've been told Sir ; when they buried there,

'T was long afore my time, no murderer

THE CLIFFS

That mould would hold.

VICAR. Dig in the sweet sunlight,
Tomorrow ; and we will, in the Lord Christs name,
There bury them ; on whom was surely named,
At font-stone, in their own Land, the Lords name ;
Even though were those our temporal enemies.

(Exit VICAR.)

(POSTMISTRESS DOWELL *hands forth a table and chairs,*
from her house ; and she sets one for COMMANDER
PAKENHAM.)

COMM. Quick Halliday ! and fetch my spyglass from
the car.

I thought now of airships ; what see I aloft ?
Who has good eyes, look seaward, on the sky,
High as a topmast.

HALL. (*returning with the telescope.*) I can see her Sir :
Reckoning, as from up street, three points to port !

COMM. An airship 's sailing hither !

HALL. Aye, áye ; that 's it Sir.

COMM. I hear now their shrill buzzing air-propeller !
(*Observing them through the telescope.*) Those change
direction ; that makes her nose roll,
And tilts her aft too ! Now they 're heading for us,
I durst be sworn, (almost I see their faces !)
That who sit in her, are two Englishmen.

THE CLIFFS

HALL. Those come fast on ; they'll pass away above us.

COMM. Stand Halliday, on this table : semaphore to them.

They'll sight you thus : now quickly ask, WHAT NEWS.

See if those understand our Service Code.

One points a telescope : the other semaphores to us

Back, what . . . ? That's *I. N. V.* . . . I've lost next letter !

HALL. An *A.* Sir : after that *S. I. O. N.*

COMM. Great God ! *INVASION !* and that I've long looked for !

(*To HALLIDAY.*) Have here my glass.

HALL. (*looking through the glass.*) There's more those semaphore to us.

COMM. What, what ?

HALL. HAVE YOU THERE TELEGRAPH ?

COMM. (*receiving back his glass.*) Signal, YES !

(*Watching them.*) Those seem now make them ready to alight !

What do I broidered see, on both their caps ?

HALL. Looked like *PRO PATRIA*, word's etched on my cutlas ;

Which means, they say Sir, *RULE BRITANNIA.*

THE CLIFFS

(VICAR *re-enters in khaki. Two medal-ribbons are seen sewed upon the breast of his tunic.*)

VICAR. That 's our first sign, which shows them to be men,

As I am one, of Britains SACRED BAND !

COMM. Where be those now ?

VILLAGER. Sir, they be dipped below
The ashen trees.

COMM. With Halliday, some of you

Run ! catch her trail-rope : and on that all hang.
So give 't two turns about tree, stub or post.

All hands then hold her ; whilst the men light out.

A VILLAGER, (*returning.*) They 've, in the ashen
meadow Sir gone down.

ANOTHER VILLAGER. They 're coming on to you Sir.

(*Enter two Aeronauts.*)

FIRST AERONAUT. Where is the Captain

Of Coastguards, some of you Friends told us of.

COMM. Whence sailed you ? (*Returning their salute.*)

At your service ! I now sáw you

Descending from the blue.

AERONAUTS. We, in our airship ;

North Sea, with a fair wind this night o'erflew ;
From Burgham, in Persania, here to shore.

COMM. What tidings there ?

THE CLIFFS

FIRST AERON. In Burgham haven, we saw
At nightfall commandeered all merchant ships,
And seamen too were pressed. Their hostile mind,
Thus being ascertained ; with cylinders,
(Beforehand secretly prepared to this ;)
We, in high-walled yard, inflated our balloon.
That, when we 'd cut adrift, with us aboard,
All suddenly swooped, above high wide-built roofs :
And thick battalions, in their citys streets,
Marching on towards the quays, we twixt the
lamps,
With music, to embark, saw under us.

COMM. What blood is this, that makes your sleeve so
stiff ?

POSTM. I 'll wash it Sir.

SECOND AERON. Thanks ; but we 've too much haste.

COMM. How happened this ?

FIRST AERON. When some perceived our flight ;
(We had returned none answer to their challenge :)
We heard command ; and thousand *Mausers'*
mouths
Saw glittering, pointed up, at once, at us.
Leapt fire forth from their barrels, singing lead :
But rising fast, we passed, with little hurt :
Yet was my brother toucht.

THE CLIFFS

SECOND AERON. I knew it not,

Where all was dark, till this forearm grew cold.

FIRST AERON. When the moon rose o'er sea, we
bandaged it.

DOWELL, (*bringing basin, with towel and warm water.*)

I've learned to lend first aid ; and we have here

A surgeon, lives next door. He's not gone far.

(*Gazing up the village street.*)

SECOND AERON. Good Mistress thanks ; but we've now
too much haste.

VICAR. TESLEM 's the sign !

BOTH AERONAUTS. Ha, brother, *Teslem* ! heartily again.

(*They join hands, as brethren, together of the Sacred
Band. A loud angry murmur is heard, of Villagers
talking together.*)

COMM. Keep cool your heads ; for all is not lost yet.

Go Halliday, call me out all village cyclists.

(*Exit HALLIDAY.*)

AERONAUTS. But where 's the telegraph ?

POSTM. Here Sirs, in my shop.

And know, that London is already warned.

The telephone too is open, would you speak.

FIRST AERON. (*at the telephone within, looking back to
his comrade.*) O, what do I hear ! Is this huge
Londons Voice ?

THE CLIFFS

Thick, confused, roar of infinite human throats !

London is up : sound myriad shoveling feet !

(*To the POSTMISTRESS.*) Ring up the Admiralty, call
me the War Office.

POSTM. I fear they 're hard to come at Sir.

AERON. What say you ?

COMM. You 'd find their gilded gates and pompous
doors

(Those slug out Sundays !) slammed, sparred with
iron bars ;

As though the World did drowse and enemies sleep,
Till Monday !

FIRST AERON. On sunless Britains enemies,
The Sun doth never set !

COMM. That 's quite beside, . . .

VICAR. Beyond, I fear, their wit !

SECOND AERON. They 're paid for weeks ?

COMM. What days the shops, are also those shut up.
Say sixty in a roud year, they truant it.

FIRST AERON. Two months in twelve ! well, that
might seem enough.

SECOND AERON. What do they with their week-ends,
as they call them ?

COMM. Some bask in petticoat smiles, in country
houses ;

THE CLIFFS

Some fiddle time away, by 'Thames fair side.

Some snob it at the Loll.

FIRST AERON. The Loll ! What 's that ?

SECOND AERON. We 've long time been abroad.

COMM. Toadeaters Club.

New dawdle place, for lounging counterfeits ;

That some Venetian haughty palace apes ;

With columns of three orders and quaint frieze ;

And balconies and grimy belvederes !

Vast crystal windows, rimmed with noble bronze ;

All fogbound as the spectres in their streets :

Corinthian gilded chambers, balustrades

Of marble ; lofty halls for little men.

In such gewgaw Palladian architecture,

Of strutting rocks, can hardly a gentleman,

Or be himself, or think to any purpose.

Other, in unthrift corners, out of sight,

Lurk. Anything to escape dull hours of duty ;

Hours of dull duty, in the Public Service !

VICAR. Well, Pakenham, that is plain, plat, seamanlike.

COMM. Call 't what you will. For me, I do defy

INTEREST, that sews mens mouths up, in the Service.

If one be handspiked up, with no more merit

Than other hath ; not justly he o'errides,

Treads down the rest : such favour is scarce honest.

THE CLIFFS

What more should I fear any human trash,
Under Gods heaven! That heaven eternal is,
Wherein I trust: they 're one years Autumn
leaves,

Of tree, whose root now ready is to perish.
My brain 's as good, my blood 's as red as theirs.
But more than that, I am an Englishman
Zealous exceedingly, for my Countrys service!

POSTM. I 've the War Office! now Sir, you can
speak.

FIRST AERON. (*at the telephone.*) Hilloa, hilloa! We
are two aeronauts;

Men of the Brotherhood of the Sacred Band;
Lighted, o'erflown North Sea, on Norfolk Coast.

Persanias high-sea-fleet, transporting soldiers,
Sails; *aye, we think has sailed, to invade England!*
Flying to bear you tidings; we 've outflown them.

(*The Aeronauts return from the office.*)

POSTM. Will you not tell us, what their answer is?

FIRST AERON. They say, Fly on to Norwich; where
shall wait

A train, they 've telegraphed for, to race us up,
To them in London; so Farewell! in haste.

(*A steaming breakfast tray, brought out from DOWELLS
shop, is set before the Aeronauts.*)

THE CLIFFS

DOWELL. Stay, please you Sirs one moment, to partake

Of slight refreshment, ere you further fly.
That ye be hungry and cold, descended now,
From chill night skies, can see a womans eye.
Honour, heart-worship, to that Sacred Band,
Which jeopardy each day their lives, that we might
live !

AERONAUTS. We do accept this gladly : (*They eat hastily
and drink.*) And so we thank you.

Again, farewell !

(*Exeunt with some village bystanders, to help them.
HALLIDAY returns, with village cyclists.*)

COMM. Ye men of England, speed
Now through all highways ; know that this
day is
Of Britains life or death. Warn all ye meet !

CYCLISTS. With all our hearts, and all the strength
that 's in us.

COMM. Ride you dispersedly, North, South, East and
West. (*Exeunt.*)

POSTM. (*returning, out of breath!*) The Aeronauts are
recalled by telegraph !

HALL. They 're up already and passed almost from
sight !

THE CLIFFS

DRAWLATCH. Shall not I all our bells clang, clatter,
clash ?

VICAR. Well thought on ; Ring out, clash them all at
once !

That from our village, to nigh villages round,
Under the wind, this first alarm might sound.

(The VICARS cycle is brought round.)

COMM. A poor weak hobby thing Manby! one
seventh

Part hardly of one horse. Here, take my motor :
Twelve horses' power is in it, or fifteen.

'T would else stand all day idle : my post is,
Here within hearing of this telegraph.

VICAR. I 'll use it thankfully ; all the Country side
To raise. Chauffeur, set speed at thirty miles ;

COMM. And step my Union Jack in the cars bonnet.

VICAR. Farewell ! All ready : till we 're grown quite
hoarse,

We 'll shout Invasion, by all ways we pass ;
Till even the fields' green hedgerows ring it out.

May hundred villages hear our message thus.

(Exit VICAR in the motor carriage.)

AN OLD SMOCKED VILLAGER. The Coroner I see!
returning with the Quest.

(Enter the CORONER and others.)

THE CLIFFS

THE OLD VILLAGER. Sir, will you say us, what the
Verdict is :

(I and Hobbe, nígh of one áge Sir wor together !)

SURG. An open verdict : John Hobbe was found
murdered ;

The evidence doth not yet suffice to show,
By whom. Suspicion points to alien strangers
Deemed to be foreign spies.

A VILLAGE JURYMAN. We matched the sword,
Of one of the men fallen from the balloon,
With murdered Hobbes death wound. Their soles
accord,
With strange footprints seen by him on the
ground.

Besides, we a swarm of little footmarks found ;
As childrens feet had trodden all around.

We cánnót tell, whát those mean. Hobbes corse,
when found,

They say, was covered with green leaves of fern !

*(Enter WARD, village constable, walking before the body
of murdered HOBBE ; which is borne forth on a
hurdle upon the shoulders of Coastguards and
Villagers. The dead, covered by the Coastguards
white ensign, is overstrewn with heath-flowers.*

Aged MAKEPEACE, bowed down with grief ; and a

THE CLIFFS

daughter-in-law, with orphan children, follow the bier, weeping. The dead mans sheep-dog goes by, amongst the children, with drooping head. Bystanders uncover. Two aged women step forth from the Village throng, and go to sustain the faltering steps of WIDOW HOBBE: they uphold her under the arms. Younger wives and maidens, join themselves to the hindward of the funeral train, which passes forth, singing now an hymn.

DOWELL gazes after them: then drying her eyes, she hastily re-enters the telegraph-office; and issues soon after, with a new despatch.)

POSTM. More words come in; new telegram for the Captain.

(She hands him the message.)

COMM. (*reading.*) Is ascertained, since midnight have been cut,

At sea, all cables from the Continent.

(Telephone bell sounds within.)

POSTM. The telephone call again!

(She hastens to her instrument.)

POSTM. (*within.*) Hallo-hallo!

(She is seen writing down words as received. Then she comes forth, and delivers a new despatch to CAPTAIN PAKENHAM.)

THE CLIFFS

COMM. (*reading.*) A wireless message, from the scout-ship *Fox*,

To the Admiralty, reports ; Persianian war-fleet,
Sixty great ships, with more than hundred transports,
Sighted, in two divisions, now at sea ;

Steering out Westward, as for Englands Coast.

Besides, from mast-head ; there is now made out

A swarm forerunning of torpedo-craft,

Writhing like water-snakes, through the sea-mist.

Before, around them, suddenly, there is risen

As a thick vapour : that cloud-high ascending ;

Hides them, advancing with them.

SURG. That sounds like

Some new found tale in 'Thousand-and-one-
Nights !'

Have you Postmistress, heard the words aright ?

POSTM. I think so Sir.

COMM. It is *The Naval Screen* ;

Whereof I lately read ; (a new Invention !)

In MAST HEAD, our new Service Magazine.

SURG. Nothing's been said of it hitherto, in the
Lancet.

COMM. 'T is true though. Verily I think they'll
invent soon

A new Hell !

THE CLIFFS

SURG. And, fall first in it themselves,
Please God ! But what if those our battle-fleets
Elude ?

COMM. Ere this, sky-skipping messages,
From the Admiralty, have them recalled at speed.

SURG. When think you, might our battle-fleets arrive ?

COMM. The wind 's chopped round ; and gins now to
blow from us.

(He observes his pocket aneroid.)

The glass too is falling ! Storm that breaks East of
us,

Should some hours hinder th' enemies' high-sea fleet.

Soldiers, nor heavy field-artillery and horse ;

If it come on to blow, could not be landed,

In a seaway. Should needs their cumbered transports

Run for some shelter. On our English part ;

The now combined Atlantic and Home fleets,

For the trade-route manœuvres, must fill up

Coal, which they 've spent last week. Allow for this,

Might they be off Portland, say, by Wednesday ;

when

Gibraltars fleet should fetch the Channel mouth.

*(Enter farmers GODWIN and FREEMAN, discoursing
together.)*

THE CLIFFS

GODWIN. You 've heard the óld rime ? *Who would
England win,
Must at Weyborne Hook, begin.*

FREEMAN. 'T is time we looked to it !

GODWIN. But they 'll have since hatched many a
new plot ;
Who knows, where they will strike defenceless
England ?

(The farmers salute COMMANDER PAKENHAM.)

FREEMAN. Ha Sir ! had Englishmen been bred to arms ;
They 'd not now care, whether by land it were,
Or sea, they met with Britains enemies.

GODWIN. We 've both been out, to get our horses in.
You might Sir some occasion have for them.
Must guns and ambulances be well horsed.
Reserve, in this clay-ground, of heavy teams,
Should be at hand. I 've three plough-teams of
three,
Strong punches ; and my neighbour Freeman here,
Who rents the Manor Farm, and works land more,
By half than I, has standing in his yard,
Fifteen.

FREEMAN. We 've been Sir, yeomen in past years.
Had we but arms, we 'd gladly mount our mares,
To serve this Land of ours, as Volunteers.

THE CLIFFS

GODWIN. We both would willingly jeopardy life and goods.

COMM. Thanks gentlemen : there can no man more than this.

(Taking forth a note-book.) And gladly I register your auxiliary teams ;

Nine horses and fifteen, for the Kings service ;
Makes four and twenty. It might further help,
Would you both hold yourselves in readiness here
Tonight, with your two saddle-mares. Some
need

Might easily rise, of mounted messengers ;
To ride upon the spur, betwixt our posts.

FREEMAN. We'll ride, as farmers ride to hounds.
There is

No hedge nor gate, we know them all, can balk us ;
Nor baffle us any dyke, 't will be full moon.

(Enter a Countryman.)

COUNTRYMAN. I'm sent, from Chevening Village
Council, Sir ;

To tell you, from my master, the new Squire,
He've got some score or more of men together :
And we've a sergeant, on sick leave, amongst us ;
Of whom we're learning each hour to be soldiers.
There's come a Sherifs order down from Norwich ;

THE CLIFFS

Calling out all male persons from fifteen
Years upwards, in defence of the Kings Realm.

COMM. Poor patriot People ! but it is too late.

Undisciplined throngs, without arms, cannot save
us ;

Fault of a parricide seditious Párliament.

SURG. Men ignorant of first principles of Estate !

COMM. That puffed up with presumption, would
outride

Old virtuous wisdom and experience.

GODWIN. Such did deny, to fly the Nations flag !

COMM. Or flew it upside down !

FREEMAN. They 're hardly men,

We sends to Parliament.

GODWIN. No ; they could not thrive

In any honest trade of life besides :

Catchvoters we now call them.

SURG. Though high skill,

Prudence, with wisdom, manhood, patriotism,

Abundantly doth, in every civil calling ;

Which they adorn, appear mongst Englishmen ;

There 's witty foresight in some Chandlers shop,

Thought, insight, to advance the common profit ;

More than you 'll find, in Parliament of our

Nation.

THE CLIFFS

POSTM. A telegram from the War Office, Sir,
addressed

Thus ; *Unto all Kings Officers on East Coast.*

COMM. Well, this is welcome. The new message
says ;

‘Left Liverpool Street, in twelve trains, three
brigades.

All traffic else is stayed. From Colchester Camp,
Four more with cavalry and heavy field-artillery,
Preceded them to Norwich.’

POSTM. (*returning with another paper.*) And here is
more Sir,

Over from the last message, that delayed
Was in transmission. ;

COMM. (*reads.*) ‘Flow down London streets,
With regiments of new territorial soldiers ;
Whose vanguard clamour at the railway gates ;
Threatening to beat them down, against them shut.
In Whitehall, we can hear their angry throats.’

(*Some village cyclists return, powdered with dust.*)

A CYCLIST. We’ve met, at the cross-ways, again
together.

We every house Sir warned, within ten mile.

Some that rode forth, when we did, be out yet.

COMM. Happened you to see the Vicar, in my motor ?

THE CLIFFS

CYCLISTS. We saw him not : he 'd passed Sir further forth.

(The CAPTAIN mounts on his chair.)

COMM. Good People, the sun sets ; time is take arms !

I warn you in the Kings náme, and do require :

By virtue of my Commission on this Coast,

That in this village, every one of you,

Who sound is of his limbs and of mans age,

Assemble to me, the Kings Officer.

Each bring such weapon, ready in his hand,

As he may find. All cry, GOD SAVE THE KING !

VILLAGERS. GOD SAVE THE KING. GOD SAVE, GOD SAVE
OUR KING !

COMM. Now ; hear me all of you here, Claybourne men !

Which of you have no guns, fetch axes, scythes,

Mattocks, edge-tools, pitchforks, trade-implements.

Before you, many have done, with only such,

Right manful deeds. Field-labourers, bring your
spades :

We 'll dig a trench, and cast some earthworks up.

(Exeunt the most Villagers.)

Women, shall to the Church, with the strong
walls !

We 'll ram the windows up, with sods and stones.

Clarke, bricklayer, shall have oversight of this.

THE CLIFFS

DRAWLATCH. There 's many a strong deliverance
Heaven hath wrought,

Few against mány; I 'll stand by the Church.

A VILLAGER. Bide by your bells!

ANOTHER. He 's good for little else.

*(Men and grown lads begin to come in; bearing
some ones scythes and bills, bound upon staves.
Other with axes, pitchforks, shovels, in their hands.
A few there are with them that carry guns.)*

COMM. You gunners and gamekeepers are how many?
(Counting them.) Five.

WIGG, *(Gamekeeper.)* We 've no lead: we 'll ram, in
our smooth bores,

Marbles. Such might fly light, but they must
serve.

DRAWLATCH. They 're five a penny in this shop. A
man

I 'm of few words!

COMM. Level at their officers!

I 've killed two tigers thus, at thirty yards.

*(Some of you have seen their skins hang in my
house.)*

'T is true with lead: a man 's more easily pierced.

WIGG. How Sir was that?

COMM. I few weeks had on shore,

THE CLIFFS

Sick-leave, in India ; when my ship was docked.
Slave dhows we, and gunrunners, in the Gulf,
Had, two years, hunted : I yet burned and quaked
With daily fever, when by hap it was,
I lighted, in a jungle, on the brutes
Together ; and those fell before my shot.

Shall be your sergeant, men, the gamekeeper here.
And you hard-handed, scythe and pitchfork men ;
When ye shall hear my boatswain Heartys whistle ;
Fall from your ambushes out, in their support.
Shall Ward the Constable be your officer.

I doubt not, but you 'll give as good account,
Man against man, of your manhood tonight ;
As in the hardest of extremities,
Our countrymen ever have against all odds
Of foreign enemies. Shovel-men, you come on
With me, to dig a trench and scoop out pits.
But first some run, the youngest ones of you ;
For hurdles, we shall need, to back our breastwork.

(WARD *Constable* brings a book to the COMMANDER.)

COMM. Meanwhile I 'll call names, from this Register.

Joyce, wheelwright ?

ANSWER. Servant, Sir !

COMM. *Reed*, carpenter.

THE CLIFFS

ANS. Here.

COMM. Is *Hazelwood* here ?

ANS. I 'm standing by you Sir.

COMM. You are a baker.

A VILLAGER. You might téll that Sir,

By his baked face, and by his powdered coat.

COMM. You *Hazelwood* have an horse ? I 'll write
down that.

HAZELWOOD. For any intent of war Sir, mark her not.

My mare 's mine own ; she 's weak : I therewith
make

Delivery all round this neighbourhood of good
bread.

If she were taken, there 's far lone cottages Sir,
Wherein lie old and bedrid folk, should want,
Relief.

VILLAGER. What ground-bones, chalk, potatoe-stuff,

I wonder 's in his bins ? Wherefore his bread

'S so small, it hardly nourish may a man !

COMM. No bickering there ! Your bellyfulls you to-
night

May have of fight, gainst Englands enemies.

Where 's *Martin*, shoemaker ? *Martin* !

MARTIN. Here ; yes Sir !

COMM. (*aside.*) A likely tall man too, to be a cobbler !

THE CLIFFS

MARTIN. For somewhat I was always good, I wor Sir.

Though by my lamp I sits late, at the last.

'T is the hammering Sir, that does it ; hammering
makes

The man !

COMM. Why is this next name cancelled thus ?

DRAWLATCH. You 'd say Sir, *Harvest Kempe* : he 's a
dead clay.

MARTIN. I and hé tried many a wresting fall together.

DRAWLATCH. 'T was but last month Kempe died ; I
buried he.

Almost I wor afraid to fill him in ;

And though I never had no words with him.

He 'd come, when I was sick, to ring my bells ;

And yet I never knew him go to Church.

VILLAGER. Too often sitting late on the ale-bench,
Killed Kempe.

ANOTHER VILLAGER. He thought that gave him the
more strength.

COMM. What was Kempes craft ; and why named
Harvest thus ?

GODWIN. Was Kempe, they say, born in an harvest
field.

Some called Kempe Hurst for short ; some called
him Hal.

THE CLIFFS

NEWLANDS. I've heard Kempe was the gleaning
womans name,

That found him.

DRAWLATCH. I her buried : her 's been gone

Twelve year now come next Michaelmas.

NEWLANDS. Poor Kempe was,

(Newlands 's my name sir, *junior*, in this Register !)

Of poachers craft.

VILLAGER. Harvest, he wor a strong one !

SECOND VILLAGER. Bove any man, to wrestle and to
run.

FIRST VILLAGER. To fight, to swim : myself, I've some-
time seen

Three constables, with a warrant, hardly hold him.

SECOND V. Our vicar wor the only man Hal feared.

FIRST V. Aye, he 'd like a lamb fare, at his only word.

NEWLANDS. I could tell more of Hal, would you it
hear Sir.

COMM. Be brief, young man ; th' extremity of the
time,

And this nights business makes, we've little leisure,
To hear your village matters.

NEWLANDS. Wonder was,

To hear Hal, of an evening, sit and talk ;

When now and then, he 'd look in at the mill ;

THE CLIFFS

He knew the paths of all fourfooted game,
And flight of every bird. Of herbs and moths,
And such-like, seldwhiles seen, Hal knew as much,
As Nature-lovers in the town, that waged him.

VILLAGER. He 'd a good breed of ferrets ; that I know.
Thus many a crown from time to time Hal won,
To help his living.

ANOTHER VOICE. Hurst could springes set,
And snare a wood, the best of any man,
And draw, even single-handed, a bushed field ;
Or from some unwatched covert lift the eggs.

VILLAGER. Light nights and early mornings were Hals
time.

But when was season in of plovers' eggs ;
Lord ! how Hal knew to gather them on wild bents,
(Where he poached conies,) as we do hens' eggs.
Those few weeks, he 'd spend freely at the Inn.

NEWLANDS. Poor Hal, in all, was like a gentleman,
And though he could not thrive. ' Gods was, he 'd
say,

This mould we tread on ; not an only mans,
Nor two nor three mens, were our fenced-in fields !'

VILLAGER. Was Hurst, I 've heard tell, come of gypsy
kind.

He longwhile could not anywhere abide.

THE CLIFFS

ANOTHER. I've known him lope, by lanes and over
fields,

Like an old fox, in one night, thirty mile.

ANOTHER. You'd always hear Hal whistle, as he came,
With light heart and light foot, by a roadside.

Any poor body Hal would help at need.

He seemed best love sick, old and impotent folk.

VILLAGER. He'd dig their patch, and ne'er of such
take aught.

ANOTHER. He'd slay the man that child or woman
wronged.

FREEMAN. I've Harvest known save lives too ; when,
for rain,

Runs Shelford Water strong and hard to pass ;
Where now our County Council build a bridge.

I saw, one time, in Winter, man and horse,
Come to mid-stream borne down. Hal lodged fast
by,

Then, in a cabin he had made of reeds,
On some waste ground. Heard cry, I saw Kempe
run ;

And like a water-spaniel, he plunged in.

NEWLANDS. Was that my father ; I was then a child.

FREEMAN. I saw Kempe save your father, to the brink ;
And draw then horse and cart out of the race.

THE CLIFFS

Was running wild. I've known, from under th' ice,
Him fetch a drowning man ; and though that was
One who 'd informed against him.

NEWLANDS. Hal 'd as soon

Save a poor soul, that never could reward him ;
As any well-to-do man, that there was.

VILLAGER. He his parents never knew.

NEWLANDS. Newborn, had they

Forsaken him, I've heard my father say,
Under green bough.

VILLAGER. He 'd sing, like lark in cage,

Behind iron bars, to while his time away.

NEWLANDS. Oft as the bench of magistrates sent Hal
thither,

They felt a secret pang to fret their liver.

They 'd lastly a mind among them, we heard say ;
Some small thing, by subscription, to raise for him ;
Might Kempe help to live honestly, now grown old.
Should Hal, (though he could never abide master,)
Be appointed watchman, by this County Council,
Of Claybourne Warren, with a bit of garden,
To dig in, round his cottage ; but Hal died.

The path, as we walked sorrowful home from
Church,

That Saturday afternoon, was full of sighs.

THE CLIFFS

COMM. We 've done with Kempe : ye say the man is dead !

VILLAGER. 'T is pity, say we all, that Kempe be dead :
He 'd 'a made Claybournes enemies Sir, weep blood !

COMM. Hearken ! I give to every man his charge.

Remember, ye be all of the Kings service ;

Until, my friends, I you again discharge.

Where 's Early, postman ?

ANS. Here !

COMM. What can you do ?

EARLY. I walk Sir, with good memory, many a mile ;
All gates and paths I know.

COMM. Ye are a servant of the State already.

I 'll write you down, for guide, when you 're off
duty.

Where 's Bailey, blacksmith, man of good discretion,
To singe or shoe a mare, set farmers' gear,
A cart wheel, tyre ; or mend a motor-car.

A VILLAGER. I 'll call him sir ; Bailey 's my brother-
in-law.

(Enter BAILEY.)

COMM. I appoint you Bailey, village officer.

VILLAGER. He 's strong in the arms, Sir.

COMM. Hearken all of you !

The vicar shall take charge, if I tonight

THE CLIFFS

Mishap, instead of me. He 's parson both
Men, one that can command, and a true soldier.
Shall Surgeon Newton be, (who 's like a father,
To every one of you,) Redcross officer.

You 'll find me sitting, soon as I 've been round,
To supper in the Inn. Go likewise home
Now all to sup. I and my Coastguards then,
Will teach your squads a trick of war or twain.

(Exeunt Villagers.)

COMM. *(looking at his watch.)* The vicar 's late, on the
dark road, tonight !

(Enter GARLAND and HALLIDAY.)

HALLIDAY, *(saluting)*. We 've rigged a look-out mast
Sir, on the Cliff,
With shrouds and ladder, gainst the morrows light.
We 've yet seen no strange ship.

GARLAND. Sir, to report,
I 've come up from the Gap : where is run in
A yacht this evening, from before the weather.
They hardly fetcht it. As we watched, us
thought
She must miss stays : but she was handled well,
And answered it. A light and handsome craft
She is, of sixty ton, or thereabout,
And Yarmouth built. Her name, painted in gilt,

THE CLIFFS

'S *The Thrush*. They're eight days out from
Norway Coast.

Her Owner's one Sir Robert Bond, who sails
Each year there, with a company of his friends.
We saw three gentlemen stand abaft the mast.

Four of us, in our dinghy then put off,
To show them holding ground. When she ran in,
And they let anchor go, she brought up well.
Her Owner, shouting through his megaphone,
Hailed then, and asked of us the last shore-news.

That heard, they ran their ensign hastily up ;
And soon as ever they had made all snug :
The whole yachts company, leaving her to ride,
With two aboard ; rowed, in the boat they lowered,
To land along of us, with vehement oars.

The crew are deep sea fishermen of this Coast ;
Used to all hardships, in their herring-smacks.
Besides four gentlemen, seven be come ashore.
All have good guns and rifles ; and their mate
'S a tall Norwegian, who his rifle bears ;
Half-inch thick in the barrel, of strange fashion.
They've volunteered to man along with us,
The Gap tonight. I left them coming up.

COMM. How many are there fishermen at the Gap?

GARL. I've, of a Sunday, counted nine or ten

THE CLIFFS

Good boats drawn up. I reckon there 's a score
Of able-bodied, what with old and young.
For arms, they 've but some long duck gun or two,
And flintlock pistols of their smuggler fathers :
And o'er their mantelshelves, there hangs a few
Old cutlases.

COMM. I telegraphed today early,
To th' Admiralty, for fifty stands of arms.
We shall have forty men, to hold the Gap.
You 'll build there breastworks and dig rifle pits !

GARL. All longshore men Sir 'll fight along with us :
So will their strong old ones and tough young hands.
(*Enter SIR ROBERT BOND, Gentlemen Friends and
mariners, bearing guns and rifles.*)

SIR ROBT. BOND. Good evening Sir, my name is Bond ;
and these

Three gentlemen are my Friends. We all were glad,
To stand again on Englands soil. But what
Is this INVASION ? We are twelve armed men,
And ready all to serve as volunteers,
Tonight, at your commandment, here on shore.
And Skipper Eric, this my mate, is like
One of our countrymen, a man of mettle.
We 've four thus or five rifles and eight guns ;
Purdies and Winchesters, a good one for each.

THE CLIFFS

COMM. You gentlemen are right welcome ; so 's your mate.

SKIPPER ERIC. I 'm glad *om* dat ; I *er* halv Englesman
Dese gentlemend, dey can shoot ; I 'm good at fight.
I 'm for all weders and unweders : lang
Af you, I 'll for de *Drosb* and Engeland fight.
For Normand, Hollander, Dansker, Engeland is
Ane second Birthland. Derfor 's my blood up ;
Hvilk springs from heart of Harold Haarfager.
I 'm not named Thorketel, for nothing neither !

SIR ROBT. BOND. Will you Sir dine with us on board
the yacht ?

An hour from now ; and taste a salmon steak,
(Such poor fare as we 've there laid up in ice,)
Bear-beef, and some wild roast of reindeer flesh ;
All our own killing : after that dessert,
Of Norway fells' blue-berries with sour cream.

A GENTLEMAN. What need die hungry ; and we died
tonight !

COMM. I 'd come, and willingly ; were not my post
here,

To be all night tied to this telegraph wire.

You then Sir Robert Bond will, Friends and
Scamen,

Help with my Coastguard and the longshore men,

THE CLIFFS

To hold the Gap : whilst, with this village folk,
I'll watch till day here, gainst surprise of airships.
(*Exeunt SIR ROBERT BOND, and yachts company.*)

(SCENE : *Claybourne Village street, before the Sun Inn.*
COMMANDER PAKENHAM *on the doorstep ; Coast-*
guards and others.)

COMM. I 've now got in reports, from all my Stations,
By telephone ; and all say, they 've nothing seen.
HEARTY. 'The Parson 's coming Sir : I hear his toot.
(*Enter VICAR, weary and powdered with dust, which he*
beats from him.)

COMM. I gan to feel uneasy, at your being
So late on a dark road. I brought this morning
No lamps with me, to light the motor car.

VICAR. Captain and friends, we 've been delayed ;
good evening.

COMM. What tidings of the way ?

VICAR. By afternoon,
We 'd nigh two hundred miles, through Norfolk,
ran.
Being then, in Norwich way, we saw approach,
As a thick cloud. Was that high-riding dust
The army ! and we drew out, to let them pass,
Of the wayside ; and ranged in a ploughed field.

THE CLIFFS

COMM. One little moment !

(He enters the Inn and returns.)

By your leave, I 've given

Now orders, for your supper, in the Inn :

For Vicar, we must have you here with us.

Till that is ready, we would of your journey,

Hear now some tidings ; if you 're not too weary.

VICAR. Londons army . . .

COMM. Already !

VICAR. Aye, many a corps,

And troops and regiments come from Country-parts.

First were new motor war-wains, that rushed by us ;

On each two Maxims, breastwork and twelve
soldiers.

In half a mile, we numbered fifty pass.

On fleet wheels should patrol those all East Coast.

Soon came by yeomen, that can ride and shoot.

Then saw we cyclists, speeding with bright arms,

Strapped on their bars ; and passed those glittering
forth.

So went by boy-defenders of the Isle,

Carbines on shoulders ; and with radiant looks,

Those ran forth hundred paces, on light feet.

Two hundred then, to martial shrilling note,

Of fife and bray of trumpet, stedfast marched ;

THE CLIFFS

And each one, at his back, bare a great loaf,
For his days victual. On those Peoples sons,
Well exercised to scout, and taught to shoot ;
And that have kept the covenant of their youth,
Pure body and bright spirit, proudly looked
The brigade officers, knowing their lads' hearts ;
That, what day it shall fall for them to tread
The battle field, in proud defence of theirs,
(Young English hearts !) there none will shrink
before

An Enemys face, whom lead and steel can pierce ;
But give, and stedfast receive, wounds and death.
Of such, upgrown to manhood, a new England
Shall rise, more full than now of public worth !

New lighted from the trains, after them marched
Tall men of Norwich, to loud Musics note :
And incensed, gainst the enemies, were their hearts.
Followed them miles' long dusty regiments,
Marching on with thick tread ; of whom some made,
Inthronging through green fields, new beaten trode.
And many, in bitter anger of their hearts,
Loud cursed, malignant parricide Parliament ;
Whereby great EMPIRES Mother-Land, betrayed
Had been, to her strong insolent enemies ;
Which this Invasion long ago prepared.

THE CLIFFS

The London Scottish, with brave bagpipes,
marched ;

To fling those false Invaders from the Isle,
Or perish. With them vied, in strenuous tread,
The loyal Irish ; whom, with an hand-harp,
White-frocked, great bearded man, their bard,
played forth ;

And at his side, a tall war-wolf-hound went.

Armed throng we saw then from the Temple-
courts,

Of Londons lawyers, men contentious-faced,
To uphold Britains honour, firm of purpose.
Young and hoar heads, their formal togas doffed ;
All khaki-clad, marched, keeping even ranks :
Covered their quadrate companies much road-
ground.

Followed the Universities' eager youth,
As in their boats they row, with one great heart,
Frank, even-paced. 'The manhood of the most
Yet smoothfaced, some with the first beard : were
mongst
Them not few elders, young men late ; now
grown,
In place and the humanities of the schools ;
To fátherhood, mid-áge, and first hoar-hairs.

THE CLIFFS

Were, on their banners, broidered names renowned

Throughout the World. We heard, as they went
by us ;

Them PATRIA IN PERICULO, sternly chant.

Followed more London corps, than I can name,
In their unending ranks. A Band with swart-
Eyed looks, we marked ; whose Captains leading
forth,

With lifted sabres, turning oft their looks,
And to the shifting of their soldiers' feet,
Treading then backward ; (Jews, born Englishmen,)
Shouted commandment, in strange Hebrew tongue ;
Men faithful to the State wherein they dwell,
Those, in whose hearts antique war-fury burns,
Marched to do battle at the foster-shore.

So long we gazed, that now the westing sun
Beyond the gold-red cloud-rows, gan to stoop,
To low chill border of the dimnéd World.
And in nigh covert, the blithe throstle cock,
Last joyous notes of his full-throated song,
Before nightfall, on an high bough, poured forth.

Came then, with swift strong tread and lofty
looks ;

That seemed those giants in that evening light,

THE CLIFFS

Erect, well knit and strong to every proof ;
All ready as they had caught up in East England,
Their patriot arms, All-Britains SACRED BAND ;
Keeping true measure, with soul-lifting chant,
Hasting to battle, of their leaping feet.
And rose refrain, (for attuned be to music,
Their constant hearts,) from thousand valorous
throats,

SONS OF THE ISLE, SANCTA BRITANNIA.

Some of grave age : oft seen with fathers, march
Their sons ; with some even grandsons. None
account

Those make, how few or many be mens years.
Have not all, to this day, kept green their hearts ;
And exercised their king-souls, through daily tasks,
To manifold suffrance, fortitude, hardihood ;
Thralling their mortal bodies of this flesh :
Day, when shall they contend, to the last man,
A living bulwark, warding Britains Coast :
Over all whose corses must Her Enemies pass.

(*With great voice.*) FOR THE LIFE OF THIS NATION,
BE OUR DEATHS !

(CAPTAIN PAKENHAM *re-enters the Inn.*)

VICAR, (*to Village bystanders.*) Have you all supped ?

VILLAGERS. We have, Sir.

THE CLIFFS

VICAR. Sexton, toll then

The bell for Church, and light the candle-staffs.

I'll read the epistle : so shall we all say

Together the Lords Prayer. Few words then I

Will speak : it might be the last time we meet.

Claybourne tomorrow may be burned out walls.

We've hardly in centuries friends, of Englands
years ;

We nor our fathers, known of homely wars,

The enormous impious calamities :

I can here afterward return to sup.

*(Exeunt VICAR, and with him the most villagers. Enter
HALLIDAY armed.)*

HALL. I come from them that digged the village trench ;

We've learned them some of our war-exercises.

There's likely lads, amongst them, to make soldiers

My mates now from the Station, are gone down,

(As sent the Captain orders from the Sun ;)

With arms tonight, to hold the landing-shore :

And they will our torpedo carriage run,

With her new launching gear, out on the pier.

(Looking up.) This wind's backed round, and sits
within a point,

Of West-Sou'-West : it's signalled from the *Lizard*,

With speed there sixty mile ; 't will soon be here.

THE CLIFFS

(*To the villagers.*) 'T is blowing up mates, for a
dirty night ;

One that will make ashore your millsails walk !

GODWIN. Is there news of the army ?

HALL. Th' army lies,

I heard say, camped in th' open fields and heath.

GODWIN. Where 's that ?

HALL. From here five mile, North and by West.

GODWIN. That 's Somerfield parish.

HALL. Very like it is ;

For Somerfield *Cross-keys*, their headquarters is.

There council now the generals hold of war,

Over their maps ; whilst we stand idlers here.

The regiments are laid supperless, without tents,

Down on their cloaks, by their piled arms, to
sleep ;

For may not till towards dawn, or midnight past,

Their Commissariat waggons' train arrive :

All save the Sacred Band, which on their backs,

Bear always full equipment and days victual.

I saw now in the moonlight, as I passed,

Some army engineers stretch telephone wires,

From point to point, on poles, long the sea-cliff.

They 're this side come, as far as Claybourne brook.

A sergeant told me, there is being sent through

THE CLIFFS

The Cavalry brigade, from Colchester camp,
In many trains. The railway regiment,
Has been called out tonight, in their full strength :
And more than fifty trainfulls are of soldiers,
Converging from the Midlands to East Coast.

(*Enter* LITTLE JAMES.)

LITTLE JAMES. A telegram, where 's the Captain ?

VILLAGERS. In the *Sun*.

(*The boy enters the Inn : then* CAPTAIN PAKENHAM
comes forth, with the telegram open in his hand.)

GODWIN *and* FREEMAN. Saddled and bridled, our
mares in the stable

Stand of the Inn ; and we ourselves are ready,
To mount at any moment. Might we know Sir ;
If your despatch concerns the Public Safety ?

COMM. I 'll read it gentlemen. (*Reads.*) ' Wireless,
received London

Nine-thirty from the *Gorgon* scout at sea,
Cruising with the *Revenge*. Since afternoon,
Is no more pulse in our *othismometers*,
Felt of the enemies' warships ; nor has passed
Their warfleet line, the reason not yet known,
Drawn hundred sea-miles from the British Coast :
Around us rages storm, with drenching rain.'
Thus runs the message.

THE CLIFFS

FREEMAN. Further would I ask,

Where lie by likelihood Sir, tonight their ships ?

COMM. The trend and tides I know of yonder Coast,
In face of us ; from days, when I commanded
The *Frolic* sloop, an obsolete wooden gunboat
Commissioned to protect our fishing fleet.

We cruised in the North Sea, as weather served
And wind, now off now on the Dogger Bank.
And I should say ; they 're run for shelter in,
Behind the Seven Isles, as seamen call them.

SURGEON NEWTON, (*who returns from attending the sick.*) To my mind, this delay doth rather point,
To some new coalition of the Powers ;
Which lately ratified protocols at the Hague ;
And them proclaimed Peace Articles of the World.
Persania is not loved, her force is feared ;
That brutal force of arms, which they abuse.
But war must first now be declared, and then
Lapse days fifteen, ere warfare may begin.

All Europes Chancelleries know full well,
Were this our mighty Ship of Britains State,
To founder under us ; should rise such waves,
Redound, reverberate, through all the World ;
Beat back, from shore to shore, an hundred years :
And still breed wars, and those beget new wars :

THE CLIFFS

That to forecast the event, must far surpass
The exercise of any mortal wit.

Were politic thought, born of insight, foresight,
And looking-back, in British Statesmen ; five
Times, should this Empire theirs exceed in force.

COMM. There's something more in the envelope.

(He peruses it.) Well, this says ;

That were by scouts sent out from Spurn, at noon,
And Stourmouth ; three Persianian small war-ships
Disguised, as merchant vessels, in the Channel,
Pursued, and overhauled. Two shot through sunk :
The third, which her torpedoes had discharged,
Is taken.

SURG. This is war !

COMM. Their crews were saved.

LITTLE JAMES, *(with a telegram.)* My mother sent me
with this message Sir.

*(The COMMANDER perusing it pauses : then claps both
hands to his forehead.)*

FREEMAN. We hope that's not some wicked news you
read Sir !

COMM. *(his voice thick, with anger and apprehension.)*

Like as had opened Hell under our feet !
My Countrymen, by a surprise tonight,
Is Portsmouth plugged.

THE CLIFFS

GODWIN *and* FREEMAN. Sir, pray you, read the telegram !

COMM. This is the sense : Two line-ships unregarded,
Of ours, the harbour-mouth passed, after dusk.
There suddenly both, by swift explosions sunk,
Thwart the Fairway ! 'T is thought both crews
 escaped

In time to sea, in their submersible boats ;
All but one pinnace, that, under our searchlights,
Was split by shot ; and what souls in her were
Not killed, their lives saved, swimming in the water.

One of those now in prison hath confirmed,
(A negro stoker ;) that, beyond the Needles,
All day four great Persianian submarines
Waylaid our ships ; where not in sight from land.
They took their crews and passengers out, mongst
 whom

Some women were and children ; and them set
On pontoon rafts, borne on the English ships,
Adrift. He thought they 'd tow them out an hour,
To sea, leaving one boat, that few in her,
Might row, towards Catherines light, for help, to
 save

Their cast-away, spoiled, naked, weary lives ;
Drifting in jeopardy, on the dim night-waves.

THE CLIFFS

Two tugs and a destroyer, from Spithead,
Have been sent out, to look for them on dark
flood.

Passed through West Channel had those pirated
ships ;

(Where to them is the pilotage well known ;)

With engine-room and navigating crews.

Divers, with salvage men, and dockyard hands,

Day and night labouring, those two foundered hulls,

To rid away, with all appliances,

May hardly achieve it, in a week of days.

The same hour, by like fraud, was Medway
blocked.

Great Baltic sailing vessel lately cleared,

Cut, after dark, her cable at the hawse ;

And drifting thwartwise to mid-Channel, foundered.

Her crew, in a steam-pinnace, fled away :

But river-police, towed by a passing collier,

Outstripped them. Being summoned to surrender,

Those, with revolvers, armed resistance made :

One fell of ours. Their cockswain was shot down

Then ; and two wounded, ere the rest were taken.

Are those, disguised as merchant seamen, found

To be Persianian navy officers.

Their vessels lading was cement in casks,

THE CLIFFS

And sacks, of kind that hardens, in sea-water,
To stone. By raid then and forged accident thus ;
Not only are two of our three South East warports
Blockt, and in each one a reserve of warships :
But their refitting arsenals and great docks,
Vital to England, on two Coasts, are lost.

SURG. What can be worse than this ? What next,
what next ?

COMM. Such chances I 've talked over in my Club,
With Naval men, my friends, last year and this.
And we agreed, that given a clear Coast,
And half-a-week before them, they 'd cut off
Scotland, and raid Newcastle and the Forth :
And landing in poor disaffected Ireland,
Promise her irrevocable Home Rule ;
And a Protectorate over her proclaim.

Tardy or quickly, the Admiralty might enclose,
Both Portland and wide Plymouth Sound, with
booms.

But such then might an Enemys diving ships
Stoop under ; and with contact-mines by night-
Time sow the field. Some even might, stealing
forth,

Torpedo at their anchorage, drowsing Dreadnoughts.
Morco'er, they 'll seize our great commercial ports,

THE CLIFFS

Burn British shipping in them and destroy
All coaling stores.

SURG. This takes away my breath !

COMM. Nothing, with wind, that 's blowing off this
Coast,

I look for yet : we might see a quiet night.

SURG. That 's something gained : I 'm thinking of the
sick.

PART IV

PART IV

(NIGHT VISION : THE IDOL CLIFF AS BEFORE. *Britannias Temple is seen newly re-edified ; Her Altar-stone repaired, is crowned now with fresh garlands of fairest flowers, and overheaped, with a Nations offerings : and therefrom ariseth a thick vapour as of holy Incense.*)

(*Enter TRUTH, with Elves.*)

TRUTH. In this day of the Sun, which now hath set,
Was wafted through the Isle, a patriot breath :
Mens hearts were moved to new aspiring thoughts.
Britains soul-Temple builded is afresh !
Again her altars fume with Sacrifices.
But blindfeld yet Britannias Image is,
Deformed, oppressed. 'To remedy of this ;
Descend, King of earth-folk, mine Oberon ;
With Horn and Ring, those trusty two elf-smiths
Of stedfast heart ; (and let them bring their tools :)
To Gleamhall, cave of our solemnities ;
Whereas that world-old alabaster coffer,

THE CLIFFS

Which sealed hath stoney substance of the walls.

Therein ye SUNBENDE, clear as crystal glass,
Shall find, when ye the lid have lifted up,
My bow divine, with arrows in a case :
Gift to me of the Chariot of the Suns
Great SPIRIT ; in what day I Truth took being,
Born of his golden rays, in Island Britain.

Whereto be bounden fates, that in mine hand,
Should those deliver, at her greatest need,

The Land. Them Oberon bring Thou unto me.

OBERON. I Father go, to summon Horn and Ring.

(OBERON *issues and returns : and those two elves presently enter after him, bearing smiths' frails upon their backs, and running.*)

HORN. I swear, by my pate,
We 'll return to Thee straight.

RING. As we are true smiths,
We will open that chest.

(OBERON, *with elf-smiths HORN and RING descends.*

TRUTH *meanwhile stands withdrawn apart, before Britannias Temple ; in contemplation of her Sacred Image : and oft he reverently lifts his hands, to the heavenly Witness of the night stars.*)

AWN, (*an elf piper.*) Here 's a brave humlock stalk :
after sharp fight,

THE CLIFFS

I it wrested from Hirp ; who son was to Sheaf,
Who Wheatears son, mine ancient enemy,
Vole Hirp, on speeding shoulder, with proud threat,
Not to be borne, it bare forth to his nest :
And seemed it threatful spear amongst the mice.

(He takes up a stone.) A shive of flint ! I 'll nick
therewith five notes in it.

Thus trimmed 't will elfen, make me, a blithe pipe,
Fit to shrill even the Seven Sleepers wake.

(He essays it.) *Piff-paff-puff!* My pipe blows well
enough.

When I begin, I 'll play you a pleasant fit.

Up dancing elves ! all step on your light feet.

To sit here in the dumps, were paddock-like.

Where 's goodfellow Moth ? *(Enter MOTH.)* Moth,
bring me the hornbook.

(The book is fetched.)

Hearken, whilst I call over our elf-mote.

Young Gam and Wern and Olp and Dru and
Knop ;

Trippe, Ban and Bolt, and Clum and Pust and
Tarpe :

And Robin, where 's Robin ?

And Kexie, and goodfellow Pipit ?

(Enter more elves.)

THE CLIFFS

ELVES' VOICES. Here, hilloa-ho ! We one and all are
kicking

Our pykéd shoon and laughing on a row.

AWN. Now cast your feet : elves prove your nimble
joints.

ELVES. We are ready, as the guise is ; one heel lifted.

AWN. Who has seen Eavesdrop, that tricky half-elf ?

Whose grandam was the fay of an antique oak.

ELVES. By Thunder-shot ! we saw him not,

This eve nor tomorrow.

MOTH, (*a wise aged elf.*) Old Eavesdrop

'S an elf that smells a faery feast far off ;

And jigs at bankets, for a purse of nuts.

SOME ELVES. He 'll not play nowanights for less than
filberts.

OTHER ELVES. And those must be the best.

AWN. Who feasts tonight ?

SOME ELVES. Prince Olbin is truth-plight

To Rosalind, daughter of the Faery Queen.

OTHER ELVES. She 's a mannikin changeling ; her
name shows it.

OTHER ELVES. We have heard tell ; that she as dream
is fair.

AWN. I 've heard old Paigle say, fays gave for her,

To humans, in the cradle, Moonsheen bright.

THE CLIFFS

OTHER ELVES. And Eglantine should wedded be this
night,

To Ivytwine, in the laughing full moon.

MOTH. I was there and saw it : on hoar roots,
All gnarled and knotty, of an antique oak,
(Hallowed with many a spell, in ages past,
Of the priests' crew, unto the lightning God ;
In whose green boughs were hanged the faeries'
gifts :)

Crowned, some with plighted frets of violets sweet ;
Other, with flower-cups many-hewed, had dight
Their locks of gold ; the gentle faeries sate :
All in their watchet cloaks : were dainty mats
Spread under them, of dwarve-wives rushen work :
And primroses were strewed before their feet.

They at banquet sate, from dim of afternoon.
Dewdrop stood by, full sad that she was flouted,
By Paltock, for light love of fair Eyebright.
Whitethroat and Melilot ;
They served, their drink and meat.

Moonsheen had been promised, from her birth,
To Durind, Prince of the wild mountain dwarves :
But all for naught : now Durind may go pipe,
In an ivy leaf. Many were their cates,
Wood strawberries, cherries, apples, mast and nuts ;

THE CLIFFS

And last years bullaces, laid up in honey.

Lay trenchers of broad leaves, in all their laps.

Lawrent was their skinker ; Lawrent he sate,

With a jorum old, from the faery hows,

Of heath-flower metheglyn, between his knees.

His ladle he had made of a wood-lavrocks egg.

They drank mead out, in horns, with silver lips,

The polished shells of snails ; and acorn cups.

But to tell you Moonsooth : when half-elf Eaves-
drop,

With garland of oak-apples on his heved,

Stood up, and elf-lay sung to warbling reeds ;

And plighted Olbin had, to maid Rosalind,

(Whose eyes seemed two cornflowers, that been so
blue ;

And clear as the bubbling brooks to see to ;

Her lips, full of laughter, like buds in Spring-
meadow,

Of eglantine : the pale-rows of her teeth,

Like milk-curds seemed, and each one a gem-stone ;

Like new-forged threaded gold, her blissful hairs ;

And every one a snare, a dream of love !)

Neath the high-riding Moon. Come eventide ;

His voice as ousels note, clear-sounding blithe ;

When lifted her bride-veil of gossamer,

THE CLIFFS

(With garland dight of the sweet woodbine buds ;)
He her kissed, in all the faeries sight and hearing :
And gazing, with a melting heart, on her ;
Had, (as new token,) given, into her hand.
The forest prince ; sheen lily, of peerless kind,
That wex where the water-courses rise ;
Fair firstling of the year : like pearls of dew,
From the shut eyelids of the Faery Queen,
Welled happy tears down her two crystal cheeks,
And wetted her white bosom and bright hairs.

Then wonder thing, in the woodside, was seen,
Black Nar and Nain, of Durinds unholde train ;
Two crookback dwarves, that came in place to mock,
Unbidden guests ; and mows made to the moss :
Were changed, by faery power, to hazel studs.

There shall those stand ; each withered arm and
hand

A swart bough made ; for bogles, in wild wood.
Green leaves their Summer locks, in Winter naked ;
Wind-beat and over-dript,
With wet-cold mossy feet ;
Till the Moon falls !

AWN. Ye elves been not of years,
To have old Paigle heard ; whose blowing pipes
And bag of music could, whiles he had breath,

THE CLIFFS

Constrain the Moon, to stoop and kiss the Earth.

But whither went my fellow, old Eavesdrop ?

MOTH. Gaffer Eavesdrop went to sleep,

On the stone where he sate ;

With his skin full of mead

And his head on his breast.

Under an hornbeams eaves, Eavesdrop nods fast ;

And snorts like an owl in an ivy bush.

Light faeries, which by trip,

All in their silken smocks,

They pull his nose and laugh.

From Rosalind those return and Olbins bedding ;

Whose bride-bower, lined with silken gossamer,

Is made, like ruddocks nest, all on a bank ;

Under green-tented leaf of moonwort quaint.

Therein, on wad they lie of thistledown,

And velvet moss, to sleep, infolded warm ;

A nap spread over them is, of silken fleece.

The night spell round them thrice, the faeries said :

And since they have them left, to safely rest,

Till day : no troublous footfall them molest !

ELVES. And whither went that fay-folk ?

MOTH. At noon-night,

I saw the white armed queen, with gliding foot,

And peerless looks, uplead her shining train :

THE CLIFFS

And from my view, to secret glades, they passed.
There they, sequestered from all mortals' sight,
In carols quaint, the starry hours will waste.

But the bride company of Eglantine,
And Ivytwine so free, had parted early :
To place, whereas was deckt a Summer-hall,
Of boughs, in the green slade, those dancéd forth.
There should those twain be oned, when faeries hear
First cricket shrill in a thorn, in the full Moon.

AWN. Well 's, elfen crew, for every one of you ;
That Eavesdrop nods : were he and I together,
To sound in this Moonshine ; should not be able
Your leapweary knees, to cease from the dance,
Till Moonset ; when you 'd all fall flat on the grass !

But here comes Howt, time was, most feateous elf ;
Now he is stepped in years. I 've Howt myself
Seen carol, to each hornpipes merry note.

Then suddenly he 'd leap, and such round tumbles
fetch

In the air ; that Howt seemed thudding green mill-
wheel

Which overthrows, till now, in Claybourne brook.

Lo, his faltering steps, that one from other slide,
He upholds today, uneach on a crook-staff !

(Enter Howt.)

THE CLIFFS

HOWT. Give you good Moon! my brothers' sons.

Which of

Your youngling crew called Howt!

YOUNG ELVES. Now Awn doth pipe;

Wé would have thee Howt, to be our judge;

Here sitting on this stone, in the Moons light.

OTHER ELVES. This night we will be all under your rod.

Chide thou what's done of us young elves amiss.

OTHER ELVES. We that would fling and dance, and

beat our feet,

After the antique guise, all on the green.

AWN, (*piping*.) Foot it featly, elflings, foot it forth!

Tread round, tread round, in the broad Moonshine
path.

HOWT. I'll set me here down: too old I am grown,

To tread your jocund round, myself to beat

A trembling sod, with nimble shifting feet.

I've too long looked on heavens choir of clear stars.

Few be elves days on ground! What is our age?

Three little fives it compass in of years.

Erst Bud, what time we open our eyelids;

Then nonage, playtime, full of knavish pranks.

Next is mid-age of elves, called the Greenleaf;

When being, to our full elf-hood grown, we have

A dreaming busy head and a chin-beard.

THE CLIFFS

Then flower our days; (would we might them arrest!)
With strength to labour, love and fatherhood.

The third, Sereleaf; when wintered under hood,
Be our elf-locks; and saffron beards grow hoary.

Then fails our former strength, to wonted tasks.

And when twice hundred, of the Moons round years
Are hardly, full of changes, o'er us passed;

Us rest few frozen days and weary nights.

That's the last fit, when nigh is the death sleep,
To fall on us; that makes for ever stiff

Our sapless joints.

By the light of this Moon!

With their jerkins upsidown;

The sons of your loins will bear you forth.

They will dig and lay, in, your cold dead clay,

Under swart elder bough, with mournful mows:

And on swart moles a spell cast of that ground,

And on dank worms; lest should those wroot around.

Upleaning on their mattocks, they will say

Your name, and call it thrice loud, through the
laund!

Come home, your workstead and your bower will
they;

Where leaned your tools and hangs your husbandry;

And precious Winter store, mongst them, divide!

THE CLIFFS

AWN. I 'll sing you a little song, which Paigle made :
What is our lifeday ? but as bitter wave,
Which rideth fast on towards dark deadly shore.
Let us elves all be wise, whilst yet we may ;
And make good cheer.

HOWT. Ye which lightfooted yet,
Goodfellows, with blithe heathflowers, in your caps,
Your heydeguy's trace to Awn's music sweet ;
Till seem your giddy roundels mock the stars.

AWN. O, who of you has here,
A bugle-horn, to call our great elf-choir.

ROBIN. I can flute like an owl, *whoo-hoo-hub !* with the
best.

I can blow I a loud bugle note in my fist.
(ROBIN *sounds as it were an horn, in his knit hands ;
and blows then the owls note.*)

HOWT. 'T is dewfall, 't is dewfall ; run through the
green wood.

Hie, little goodfellows, leap over the clod.

And ye which loiter in

The smooth-cropt meadows sheen ;

Where feed ruckling the ewes, and couch chawing
fat kine ;

Foot it, skip, leap it, over the beasts' chines :

Spring elves and tumble, over each others backs !

THE CLIFFS

Run through myrtle bog, and rushy mire,
Round cobwebbed thorn ; about the scragged briar ;
Over bank, over dyke,
Over the hollow brook,
Leap hither, leap hither !
And ye hill-elves, afar ;
Come running down, adown, from your dune brinks !
 Heed ! elfen how ye tread,
On any rattling leaf,
Lest ye waken the snake ;
Which fell enemy is,
To elf-kind.

ELVES' DISTANT VOICES. We are coming presently !

HOWT. And woodelves yonder, neath the crooked
 boughs,

Which the holts' lofty antique silence break ;

Where the green holly, under bearded boughs,

Of oak, shines in the Moonlight ; what do you make ?

AWN, (*piping.*) Waken up, little goodfellows, under
 the lind !

ELVES' VOICES. Queen apples, we gather ripe ;

And simples, for our health, in Moonshine glades.

OTHER ELVES' VOICES. We, in dank thicket, little conies
 chace :

We beat them from the fern and overrun.

THE CLIFFS

OTHER VOICES. We, with hurl-bats ; to make us winter coats,

The little squirrels dun,
From Moonlight boughs ding down.

MORE VOICES. There 's great venison afoot, when the stars shine out.

We who, as they, be fleet ;
Our game is up to leap,
On the great hart, and sit
Upon the mickle tynes of his wide horns :
That headlong we may ride, through the laund !

OTHER ELVES' VOICES. We which go seeking bees' nests, cannot find them ;

Fault of this shadow of the Moon.

OTHER VOICES. We for adders' eggs, go looking up and down ;

To burn, with heavens curse, on a fire.

OTHER VOICES. We seek for little gledeworms midnight lamps,

To set them in our caps ;
Whilst we run through dim paths.

We have found but one ; and here she is.

CONTENTION OF DISTANT ELVES' VOICES. 'T is a beetle, by the steeple :

She 's a dor, she 's a chafer.

THE CLIFFS

'T is a worm, I beshrew her.

A NEW VOICE. By the man in the Moon, and John o' Green !

Ye lie, ye all lie.

A VOICE. I lie not, I ;

By Oberon King !

A THIRD VOICE. What, any elf say, by my fathers kin,
I give him back the lie.

THE FORMER VOICE. By Thunder !

Durst thou contend with me, proud paddock thus ?

I'll, on an ant-hill, bind thy quivering flesh.

I'll see there yerne tomorrow thy white bones !

HOWT. Fic, on any elfs mouth, that speaketh thus !

OTHER ELVES' VOICES. He some swart élf is ; he 's not
one of us.

Let him never thee, with a sorrow !

King Oberon, with a coal, will sear his tongue.

HOWT. Elfen should be buxom and hend !

THE FORMER VOICE. It forthinketh me, if I missaid.

HOWT. Hie hither, hie hither !

(Enter two wood-elves, running.)

FIRST WOOD-ELF. With pixies, bugs, swart elves, wood
and hill sprites,

We played pluck-buffet, in the hazel-scrogs.

SECOND WOOD-ELF. I am bruised of boughs.

THE CLIFFS

FIRST WOOD-ELF. I am beaten on either eye !

BOTH. Aread Howt ; was not this done unwoodmanly ?

DISTANT VOICES. We did it in our game.

HOWT. Your game was others game.

VOICES. This holy Moon doth know !

AN ELF. What ails tonight the Moon ?

That sits like woody owl,

In forest of the skies.

HOWT. This saying young Puck, will bring thee ill luck !

WOOD-ELVES. 'T will breed him evil hap !

AWN, (*piping.*) The greenwood and meadow !

Heigh-ho, through high and low ;

Hip ! have me where sweet woodbines blow.

FIRST WOOD-ELF. For each skip, for each hop,

As we came leaping up the walk,

My jerkin was to-torn.

SECOND WOOD-ELF. My new hood was through-wet.

AWN, (*piping.*) The dew will soon be dry,

Yond stars shall fade on high.

ELVES' VOICES. When Everglows wheel, whirling on
the sky,

Sties, welling light and day.

HOWT. Gather sweet woodbines, whilst ye may !

ELVES ALL. Woodbines, sweet woodbines, woodbines ;
whilst we may !

THE CLIFFS

AWN. Who can say this better? Sky is none elf-word.

AN ELF. I, the *Rainsbedder*.

(Enter another wood-elf.)

WOOD-ELF. Whoop-heigh and holloa!

HOWT. What have you got?

WOOD-ELF. Woodsorrel, earth-nuts, morel in my poke.

HOWT. Be 'st not thou, some batcatcher rough and rude?

Woodelves are thickwitted;

A shock-haired crew, amongst the ruffling leaves.

WOOD-ELF. At owl-time, at owl-time, we can trip

And trimly dance it, in large beechen shaws.

HOWT. And so can badgers' cubs.

WOOD-ELF. We jolive go and gay,

Then loitering in the glades, to the woods end.

AWN, *(piping.)* With a stamp, with a shout,

Run away with your revel rout!

All this doing in wood!

Where the wild rangers stood,

Under tall seemly tree:

And that, for fear of King Harold his hunt;

Which in night season, in the Chace of heaven;

With rushing tumult of a frozen wind,

And ghostly hunters' voice, and bark of hounds,

THE CLIFFS

Of fiery breath, doth griesly fare above !

WOOD-ELF. Some climbed, take culvers with the rattling wings ;

(Frayed from high slender boughs those fling !)

For howlets other seek, in hollow stubs.

Some for woodwáles, to mew them in a cage.

HOWT. Where be to-moon woodelves, your leafy holds ?

A WOOD-ELF. Sawpits been our holds ;

Which last year mensons, timber-hewers, made.

We heard oft crash of sinking boughs, and fled ;

And hollow tone then, (that enchained our ears !)

Of the felled beams, which tarried long to die.

There in the crystal Moonshine ; loath unto us,
Sits many a swart-chapped toad, listening for music ;
Mongst whom Sir Gorgel, with the leathern brow,
And old an hundred years, of forest beasts,
Is the most wise.

YOUNG ELVES. Enough of this prate, Peace !

AWN. Look elves, how now I quaintly cast my foot !

When next I pipe, I 'll teach you the new set ;

How with bent kneebows, to trace a light morrice.

HOWT. But elf sires of mine age, whose lustless feet

And old dry joints are, like to mine, unfit,

To trip, in looking of elf-maidens sweet ;

THE CLIFFS

Can on these purple toad-stools, sprung tonight,
Here round me sit : sit by me and look on,
But all the while sit mum.

AWN. Up now, young elves, dance to new merry note,
Of my pipes throat : tread it forth, tread it forth !
Piff! . . .

(Enter more elves running.)

HOWT. Whence come ye foothot ?

ONE OF THE NEW-COME ELVES. O Awn, O Howt !

Not past a league from hence, lies close-cropped
plot,

Where purple milkworts blow, which conies haunt,
Amidst the windy heath. We saw gnomes dance
There ; that not bigger been than harvest mice.

Some of their heads were deckt, as seemed to us,
With moonbeams bright : and those tonight hold
feast :

Though in them there none utterance is of speech.

AWN. Be those our mothers' cousins, dainty of grace :
But seld now, in a moonlight, are they seen.

They live not longer than do humble been.

ELVES. We saw of living herb, intressed with moss,
Their small wrought cabins open on the grass.

AWN. Other, in gossamer bowers, wonne underclod.

ELVES. And each gnome held in hand a looking glass ;

THE CLIFFS

Wherein he keeked, and kissed oft the Moons face.

AWN. Are they a faery offspring, without sex,
Of the stars' rays.

ELVES. They 'd wings on their flit feet ;
That seemed, in their oft shining, glancing drops
Of rain, which beat on bosom of the grass :
Wherein be some congealed as adamant.

We stooped to gaze, (a neighbour tussock hid us,)
On sight so fair : their beauty being such,
That seemed us it all living thought did pass.
Yet were we spied ! for looked down full upon us,
Disclosing then murk skies, Moons clear still face.

In that they shrunk back, and clapped tó their doors,
(And some in chaps and gapes sunk, of the ground ;)
One roved at me, with glancing eye !
Whereof I bleed and strangle inwardly.

(He holds his heart.)

Heart-hurt ; and every hour am like to die.

HOWT. Die foolish elf ; there n'is no remedy !

AWN. Tread round now elves, in light-foot companies,
To my pipes measure.
And when you 've had enough,
Ye shall cry me *Puff* !

(He pipes, and elves dance apace.)

THE CLIFFS

ELVES. We cry you *Puff!* We've all, we've all lost
breath.

(AWN ceases; and elves stand holding their panting sides.)

HOWT. Clap hands now merrily all, above your heads,
Whilst sleep your feet, to help this labouring moon;
Whose cheerful lamp murk scudding wrack hath
blotted.

(*They stand and all clap hands.*)

AWN. I swear by my fay
'T will all too soon be day.

ROBIN. The night lightens, heaven brightens!

WOOD-ELVES. We'll run, to watch for sunblinks in the
wood,
And cry; when shoot the first athwart green
sprays!

ELVES ALL. Gather sweet woodbines, whilst ye may!
(*Exeunt wood-elves.*)

HOWT. Run other, to the head of yond green hill:
To spy, if yet He cometh up; to put out
The Moon.

AWN. Now almost our fair night is done.

HOWT. A riddle, a riddle! Who can say,
Be the clouds of heaven odd or even?

(*TRUTH, who has longtime remained standing in con-*

THE CLIFFS

templation, before Britannias Image ; at sound of the elves' loud hand-clapping, looks round, with grave countenance : and now he slowly returns.)

AWN. A ringdance, a ringdance, all take hands !

TRUTH. GOD give you, elfen all, good chance !

AWN. Round about, round about our father TRUTH.

ELVES, *(to each other.)* Take hands, all take hands !

AWN. A wheel a rundle, on the green heath.

ELVES. A ring will we beat, with our twinkling feet.

OTHER ELVES. Till bald shall it be, as TRUTH our
Fathers pate.

(They all join hands, and dance about TRUTH.)

HOWT. Make a leg to Britannia, as you go by.

(The dancing elves lout to the Sacred Image, in that they pass.)

AWN, *(piping.)* Out nettle, in dock ;

When heaven falls, we shall have larks !

Out of the thorn and into the briar ;

Quoth the ousel to the stare.

HOWT. Stay not your nimble feet.

Skip it elves, skip it, aye higher and higher !

SOME ELVES, *(desisting.)* Our heads go round, and
round, as the Moon doth ;

If now we tumbled, we 'd fall off the Earth !

HOWT. It was not so in my day : elf-kin then

THE CLIFFS

Were of more mettle.

(Elves halt from the dance.)

ELVES. We all stand idle.

AWN. Which of you madpates

Can any new mirths ?

ROBIN. 'T is a mad mad World.

AWN. A fair, a wrestling, . . .

ELVES. And a merry-make.

HOWT. Ye elves were best be blithe and laugh upon it.

AWN. Open some hour each day to cheerful mirth,

Your careful hearts ; cry holiday ! and play and
laugh.

AN ELF. Shall we not play, who here can loudest
laugh ?

ELVES. It is a match.

OTHER ELVES. All we will play at that.

HOWT. Make ready all to laugh !

ROBIN. Laugh, whoso may for me ;

For over all I see,

So much of sorrow, I have left to laugh.

ANOTHER ELF. I can laugh, by my crown ! thunder-
loud.

HOWT. Laugh on, (I n'ot thy name,) thou fatherson.

FIRST ELF. Ten shining beans I 'll wager to thy one ;

I 'll alder loudest laugh, heark ! *bob-bob-bob !*

THE CLIFFS

SECOND ELF. I easily can outlaugh him, Fatherson ;
Though you should shut your ears : *Ab-bob-bob-*
bob !

THIRD ELF. Listen elfen all to me : I wed will my pan
I alder best, of any earthly man
Can laugh. I learned it now of the horned owl,
In Claybourne ruin : *bob-bob-bob, whub-hub !*

ELVES. Howt, judge, from thy Doom-stone, this
quarrel uprightly.

HOWT. Burdock, he hath it.

THE THIRD ELF. Nay, I Starshoot had it,
The prize another bears away from me :
Help Father Truth !

TRUTH. Children, your prize was what.

HOWT. That which I whistered erewhile in Awns cope.

AWN. A buffet elves Howt whispered, from all hands !

STARSHOOT. Burdock then may have all and Fatherson ;
For their very own.

(They all smite BURDOCK, with their elf-caps.)

TRUTH, *(holding up his hands.)* 'T is somehile
children, good to play and laugh ;
Else your true gold should rust, and turn to dross.
Take to you now your sober minds again.

ELVES ALL. Father, we will !

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. And so comes Oberon !

(*OBERON is seen rising, as from a pit ; bearing in his hands a shining bow, and arrows, in a case. The two elves-smiths, follow OBERON, with their tools.*)

OBERON. We found the coffer, such as Father, Thou
foresaidest to us.

HORN. When we 'd prised up the lid ;

RING. Issued a flame, that marvellously amazed us !

HORN. And from the massy rock, uttered dread voice.

OBERON. Quaked Gleamhall, when I lifted bow and
shafts.

RING. Seemed the hollow crumbling roof, to ruin
on us.

HORN. The floor seemed rock and shrink under our
feet.

RING. The alabaster pillars seemed then split !

OBERON. The Caves mouth seemed to open and to
shut !

We with these things fled ; and came hardly forth.

TRUTH. Under that mountain-head, the Culvers Cliff,
(Would I, mine elves, had told you this at erst !)

Lies couched chained Fiend, whose meat mens dying
breaths.

Know, he him roused when Sunbende, lifted was ;

Doubting to want his prey, if wars should cease.

THE CLIFFS

(TRUTH peers now narrowly at his divine bowstaff :
frets, and cunningly tempers it with his palm :
so plies, and adjusts thereto the string. He shakes
then bright arrows from the case. And choosing
one out from among them, he nocks it.)

TRUTH. This bow is not of metal of Earths dust :
Nor such be the Suns shafts, that can corrupt
Them the year thousands. Hear me, divine Sirion,
High Ruler of yond shining House of heaven.
Thy Power, Ah, Lord of Light, direct my shot !
That might, by this Celestial shafts swift stroke,
Yond hell-crept, direful Demons boughts be loosed ;
Which too longtime Britannia strangled hath.
This heart within me burns ! Help holy stars !

(TRUTH draws his arrow to the head and looses ! The
hideous Dragon pierced, unfolds itself, falls ; and
beats heavily down upon the heath. The sod opens,
and the monster-Fiend is swallowed up.)

TRUTH. To lowest pit of Hell, sink, homicide Fiend ;
And void for ever from mans living world !

(From the head of Britannias Image are now seen to
issue rays ; in form as it were a crown of light
divine.)

TRUTH. Again Britannias august brow is crowned,
Behold ! with living rays. Her Image is,

THE CLIFFS

Though blindfold, had in solemn reverence ;
In the hearts of the whole Nation !

ELVES. How great things,
Have, Father TRUTH, we elves, thy children seen,
Last night and this.

TRUTH. Ye shall see more ; till is
Accomplished all that Sirion laid upon us :
By whose high Power, I, in this sacred Precinct ;
Will call now up great disembodied spirits ;
That we confer may Britains ages past,
With that which is. In semblant those shall rise,
(So many as I within my secret breast,
Shall cite,) as were they sometime clothed with flesh.
And once more on this mould, which brought them
forth,

Before Britannia pace. Be strong and fear not !

ELVES. We ghostly fear, to gaze on mens passed spirits.

TRUTH, (*spreading his hands over them.*) Dread nothing :
Sirions Power purgeth all fear,

From your true hearts ! Sound, ye elves that can
pipe,

Now with me, mournful note : that may in Earths
Low lifeless womb, awake mens forepassed spirits.

(*A few elves take from their sleeves their reed flutes ; and
they sound with TRUTH, a low and mournful note.*)

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. Passed spirits in heaven, look down from your
high rests :

And souls in House of bale, lift your dark faces.
Lord of the Tomb, unlock ; King of the Slain,
Bear back, that those rise forth, the Gates of Death !

From sea-deeps, slaughter fields, from echoing
crypts ;

Whereas your corse dissolved was ; whereso on
Your souls unbound, lies now dark shadow of death :
Wake, Britains hero-dead, revive, come forth !

And walk this night-hour, on your foster earth.

*(Shrouded ghosts, rising from death-swoon ; begin to
appear wreathing, as out of a thick mist : and one
after other they come up over the Cliff-brink.)*

OSBERON, *(King of earthfolk.)* Thou TRUTH eternal,
timeless, art ; we elves,

The sons of elves, have no continuance,
On Earths green mould, or written living mind,
As humans have, of Worlds long ages past.

Whose spirits be these, that waked in their grave pits,
Thus vapour from the Cliff ?

TRUTH. Souls that with last

Thought fell asleep, for Britain, on their hearts.

ELVES. Father, sleep these passed souls, or be they
quick ?

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. In the remembrance of Heaven-King, they rest.

OBERON. Stand close, one cometh !

(A ghost of great stature, and bearing antique arms, approacheth.)

GHOST. Is this, loved foster-soil, mine *Inys* Britain,
In war, renowned ?

TRUTH. What see ye children ?

ELVES. One

Of kingly aspéct ; whose noble front is bound
With chaplet of holm-leaves : a torque of gold,
Wrought like wreathed serpent, girds his haughty
neck.

From baldrick, all with coral studs beset,
Hangs his war-sword : foursquare shield, of bright
bronze ;

Wherein, of glittering gold, be seen embossed,
Lo two infolded dragons ; whose white breath,
Of fine emailed smiths-work ; the hero bears,
Before his warlike breast. His other hand
Holds two swift-flying shining javelins,
Athirst for blood of Britains enemies.

TRUTH. Salute the King, in secret of your hearts ;
Warlord of Britain, great Caractacus.

ELVES. Why, with his high hand, shadowing his eyes thus,

THE CLIFFS

Gazeth Caractacus pensive from sea-cliff ?

TRUTH. Great Caradoc sees, dark impious bloody
tempest

Of War, towards ; and like to fall on Britain.

(*Whispering his salutation.*) All hail, to thee proud
spirit ! which, like a Sun,

Wast, king of men ; dead glory of Island Britain !

(*CARADOC passeth forth ; another royal ghost riseth.*)

ELVES. O, who is this, that cometh up in the night ?

His left hand taper bears ; is in his right,

Bent bow ; and from his shoulder, hangs an harp !

TRUTH. Thereon, with cunning hand, in the night
season,

Now in his dormer, now in warfields tent ;

He playeth, Saxon king, and singeth stern lays,

Thereto ; which he himself endited hath.

He solaceth thus his battle overthrows ;

And yieldeth to heaven high láud for victories.

This, Comforter-of-his-People, Alfred was.

(*KING ALFRED passeth ; another ghost riseth.*)

TRUTH. See Harold, earl of Wessex, Godwins son ;

Whose valorous arm hurled from scabrow of England,

New Danes invaders, on Northumbrias strand.

Too soon, ah, an énvius demon him oppressed !

(*Another ghost.*)

THE CLIFFS

ELVES. What man is this, whose belly seems a butt ?

TRUTH. Duke William ; he who, sailed from Neustrias
Coast ;

Sat down, as Conqueror, on kings stool in England.
Frenchmen and Englishmen this King made to fear
him :

He himself feared no man.

(More ghosts arise.)

ELVES. Other purpled ghosts !

(With miniver and proud ermine on their necks,)
Ascend : all like of semblant and of feature,
As they were sires and sons !

TRUTH. One lineage, all :

Are those, Duke Williams seed ; strong Robbers
crowned ;

Scourges of England, Palestine and France :
Kings in fair England, without English hearts.

Those, to maintain their alien foreign rights,
Led Britains sons, in wars abroad, to bleed,
Beyond the seas ; wherein did first resound
Proud English strokes.

(Those pass forth. Other ghosts.)

ELVES. Come men, in stately array :

The most in long furred gowns, with golden chains
Of office, which depend from their grave necks.

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. Kings, prelates, barons, councillors of estate ;
Souls of great place and reverence, in their days.
Now hardly a far off echo of whose names,
Mongst men resounds.

(They pass forth. Another ghost.)

ELVES. White barefoot maiden ghost
Stands sword-girt in the field, with rarious face ;
All in her peasants frock, to gaze on us !

TRUTH. The Orleans maid.

(Murmur of ghosts from beneath.) Forgive, wronged
virgin spirit,

Our Norman guilts, and intercede amongst
Those blessed ones, with whom thou sittest, for us.

*(She, lifting her hands in prayer, passeth forth.
Other ghosts rise.)*

TRUTH. Are souls, which now ensue, of later age.

I welcome them. Then many did begin,
To purge the cobwebbed Winter of their hearts.
Come Moore and Collet, with grave learned throng.

There 's Bully Hall : I called him now from Hell ;
Where, (there of mean account,) is turned his crown
To dross, and flame of everlasting fire ;
Which sears his brain : and he is buried under
An hill of human curses, that increases
Continually. Yet had this King one merit ;

THE CLIFFS

With builded towers, he fortified Englands Coast.

Who falls oft on his knees, and lifts for England,
Up holy hands to heaven, is Latimer :

His Spirit yet radious from flesh-purging fire.

Here 's Sir John Cheke, that the humanities taught,
With Ascham ; he who Englishmen showed with
 bowshot,

(When they had their sires' cunning nigh forgot ;)

How to prevail, o'er Englands enemies.

ELVES. Whose ghost is this, that cometh of such a port,
Swelling with pride ; though backward hollow is
He seen ! and follow with him pompous train ;
Of singing men and priests, in the night path ?

TRUTH. The Cardinal, who made Little England great ;
Now pithless bones and powder in his chest.

(*WOLSEY passeth : another ghost.*)

TRUTH. See, Edward Seymour, whom my thought did
 cite ;

Once Lord Protector. In much heaviness is
His noble spirit, on Britains Cliffs tonight.

GHOSTLY VOICE OF EDWARD, DUKE OF SOMERSET. HAV-
 ING THE SEA, FOR WALL, AND MUTUAL LOVE,
FOR A DEFENCE ; WHAT NEED TO BE AFRAID
OF ANY WORLDLY POWER !

TRUTH. Great sacred words !

THE CLIFFS

O Somerset, I would, they charactered were,
On all the skies of England.

(SEYMOURS words appear written on the clouds. Other
ghosts rise.)

ELVES. Father who

Been these of newer fashion, jerkined Captains ?
And wherefore pluck they so, with frowning looks,
Their beards ; and gaze thus from the English Cliff ?

TRUTH. Hawkins and Drake, bane of the Spaniards'
ships.

To them all ships, that sailed the narrow seas,
Did veil their ensigns. They wait on the seas,
Unknown new Nation. Hearken! will those speak.

DRAKE. This day we *Contra mundum*, stand for
England !

HAWKINS, (*laying hand to his sword.*) Yea, against the
World, my Sisters son, for England !

TRUTH. Ha, what a loving warmth, mongst shadows
there,

Breathes valorous spirits, yet in your generous breasts !
(*Those pass forth : another ghost.*)

ELVES. A stately woman ghost is risen, and girds
Imperial Crown, her wooden freckled face.

OBERON. Father, what disembodied spirit is this
Thou hast called up ?

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. Daughter of ancient Kings ;

Man-souled Eliza, from her virgin-tomb !

GHOST OF ELIZABETH. Under ceiled lofty roof and
funeral state,

Of costly marble stones, long have I slept,

Ah God ! in dread corruption, in my shroud.

Hath confined death consumed my royal corse :

Awaiting the Last Trump. LIFE-OF-THE-DEAD !

When THOU returnest, Lord Christ, forget me not :

Revive me, that I stand up on my feet.

Of living flesh, none pitieth more my death ;

Few my swart tablet read. All come to this

Last solitary low foul prison, in the dark.

I wot not times, which over me be passed ;

For all in grave's a long forgetful sleep ;

Night, without come of dawn, or entering ray

Of cheerful light, which shineth yet on the Earth.

I wake, I daze ! strong sleep did on me seize.

I dreamed, by weight of sunless cloud oppressed,

Sleepbound ; a dreadful dream ! I am the Queen.

My loving P^éople ; ye that ben come armed forth !

I hold foul scorn, that any Prince of all,

That dwell this day on Europes Continent ;

So hardy were as to set hostile foot,

Within the borders of mine Island Realm !

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. She Bacon and his brother Burleigh calls
To her ; men whose sly policies made her great :
She on their wisdoms leans.

(BACON and BURLEIGH, reverend bent men, grown old in
cares of State, come unto the QUEEN. Then, follow-
ing with her, they pass forth. Another ghost.)

ELVES. And who is this
Young man, who fervent casts his arms and folds
With sighs, them melancholy up again ?

TRUTH. Arcadian Sydney, perfect gentle knight.
Cumbers a divine fury his panting chest !

(Another ghost.)

TRUTH. Comes Camden : how disquieted now he looks !
Who in *Britannia* his wise-learned book,
Writ ; LOVE OF COUNTRY EVERY VIRTUE ELSE
DOTH COMPREHEND.

(Another ghost.)

ELVES. O, who is this stern ghost,
Jack-booted, spurred ?

TRUTH. So did he once alight
From Marston Moor.

ELVES. Fenced is his breast with plate ;
And a steel cap shines on his iron face.

TRUTH. Protector Cromwell, none more valorous
Defender of the liberties of this Nation.

THE CLIFFS

(CROMWELL, *his hand laid to the pommel of his sword, passeth by, with a stern countenance.*)

(*Other ghosts.*)

TRUTH. Rise Blake and Albemarle, lo in war-bruised harness ;

Generals at sea. They kept the Straits for England ;
Nor all her enemies could, that sailed in ships,
Them ever daunt.

(*Two other ghosts.*)

ELVES. Father, rise other spirits :

More like to men whom short-lived elves have seen.

TRUTH. Be, son and father, those the patriot Pitts ;
Guardians alert of England, in an age
Of buffoon riot, and of mental dross.

He, father, master-builder of her honour,
(His eyes be heavy with the damps of death !)
Whose greater son, (this with the marble looks,
That follows forth ;) contained the rage alone ;
And greedy purpose foiled of Buonaparte.

(*Another ghost riseth.*)

ELVES. Ah, and who is this frail man with lofty looks
And bishops face ; yet seems, by his laced coat,
Whereat hangs empty sleeve, of the Sea service.

TRUTH. Britains high Admiral ; to this soul is given ;
That every tongue which names him, shall him bless,

THE CLIFFS

Through Englands generations. With him pace
Lo, Hardy and Collingwood, on his quarter-deck,
In deep discourse ; and with perspective glass,
From time to time, lo attentively those gaze forth !
(*Other Captains are seen standing by, which confer
earnestly together.*)

GHOST OF COLLINGWOOD. The look-out frigate signals
back Sir to us :

COMBINED FLEETS IN THE OFFING !

NELSON. Heaven, be thanked !

Bear up to meet them : Captains, to your ships !
But mind, I bargain, when we grapple with them,
For twenty sail of theirs. The God of battles
Crown now our good endeavour with success !
That we may get ; as we have need, a Peace.
Farewell, my Band-of-brothers, God be with
You all, this day, in victory, life and death !

(*Those go down over the ships sides, to their boats.*)

NELSON. And hoise this signal, quartermaster ; ENGLAND
EXPECTS, THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY.

VOICES OF GHOSTS FROM THE DEEP. HURRAH, HURRAH,
HURRAH !

HARDY, (*Flag Captain.*) Ships Band, strike up !

(ADMIRAL LORD NELSONS *signal is seen displayed, in two
hoists.*)

THE CLIFFS

ELVES. That cry was from the deep ! this thrills our hearts.

TRUTH. Yond signal, flying from the *Victory's* masts ;
Whilst Britain hath left rood of land above
Salt waves, shall never die in English hearts !

GHOSTS, (*reverently inclining themselves towards NELSONS spirit.*) Lead on, great patriot spirit,
command us still :

Sail in the English ships ; wherein our sons
Serve now the King, instead of us. And be
In all, that 's wrought at sca, the NELSON-TOUCH !
(*They pass forth. A distant cannonade roars.
Another ghost.*)

OBERON. O who is this, a soul unlike the rest,
That cometh, O Father Truth, where they did pace ?
Who walks thus with crossed arms, from all apart ?
This little foreign man, with rusty teeth !
The World hangs on his looks ! He from these Cliffs,
Gazeth, with inscrutable countenance.

TRUTH. We spake now of him : he is Buonaparte ;
Come hither from far bays of mouldering death ;
Dark Gulf, beneath the Earth : for his last thoughts
Were set on Englands Cliff. Things passing great
This wrought : whereof did quake the centered Earth.

ELVES. So that our fathers heard them, in deep rocks !

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. He shed the blood of Nations, he made great Wars, wherein multitudes were, in their young years; In hundred impious fields, consumed, cut off !

GHOST OF NAPOLEON. *Eh bien ! Mon Dieu :* who would make omelettes,

Must needs break eggs. *Mais moi, j'ai tout à l'heure,* With *ce grand homme*, that Frederic was, discoursed.

Je ne l'aime pas. He blamed me, for I reft His sword down from his granite sepulchre ; And, for a trophy, sent *aux Invalides* ;

What day we entered in Persepolis, With conquering banners and loud beating drums.

I love him not, nor trust that crabbed tarte face. As for his Persic swarms, men buttoned up Unto their chins, and drilled out of their skins, Strutting with tragedy step ; them easily crushed My columns, and I should prevail again.

Yet in the end, I failed of mine high purpose ; That was, *mon Dieu* ; and seemed it no great task ! To conquer this seawall of Englands Nation, Out of my ships. They 'll fall too, I hope, short ; If those attempt to win her stormy rocks.

Et chose étrange ; some Frenchmen, lately passed, From life and cheerful sunlight down to us,

THE CLIFFS

Confirm, *que l'Angleterre* is made Friends with France!

I came now to dread seeming iron port,
Warded by twilight monsters, without substance ;
Whereat, trembling for fear, of every Nation,
Were thronging spectres ; crying Light, light, light !
My mathematic mind, disdaining that
Nightmare inane ; I it opened, and passed forth.
(A soul riseth.)

But here comes Wellington, to resist my spirit.
Parbleu ! I'll turn on him my back. *Malbrouck*
S'en va-t-en guerre !

(BUONAPARTE passeth forth humming Malbrouck : WELLINGTON cometh.)

TRUTH. Look well, on this grand Captain,

Lapped in his horsemans cloak, his peoples Faith !

WELLINGTON. How oftentimes have I testified, in
Parliament ;

And in a long Statepaper, which I left

In the War Office, evidently, have set forth ;

THAT BRITAINS OPEN ISLE MIGHT BE INVADED !

(WELLINGTONS spirit passeth. Englands ghosts range themselves upon the Cliff-brink ; and gaze out, with disquietude, to seaward.)

MOURNING GHOSTS. Disbodied, and long sleeping with
the dead ;

THE CLIFFS

We cannot turn into the World to fight
For Thee Britannia Mother ! May uneth
Our fleshless lips frame words of living speech.
For Thee, our sons must fight, instead of us.
May they not be found wanting, in what day
There shall contention be for Britains Cliffs :
When, in high heaven, the fatal lots are cast !

(They stretch their hands towards the Sacred Image.)

GHOSTS. All hail great Mother, even in endless death !
*(The Temple-doors are again opened ; and living souls
of good stature come forth.)*

GHOSTS. Who issued, stand now in the Temple porch !
Be not of us, shadows of ages past ;
But souls, which sleep nights little sleep ; not this
Which we, (for are those flesh,) of endless death.
We see them : but though those descend from us ;
We cannot, which have slept beneath the Earth,
With them commune.

TRUTH. Take comfort souls, till ye,
Which are come up from powder of the grave,
Again shall rest. Know these your generous sons,
Be fellow-soldiers, brothers-of-the-Path ;
(Thus called is Britains Empires Sacred Band :)
Whose living souls be lifted from the Earth ;
Ready each day, towards death, for Countrys sake.

THE CLIFFS

*(Souls of the Sacred Band stand discoursing together, on
the Temple-steps.)*

TRUTH. Behold them, even in their armed sleep, consult
Together, for safeguarding of this Nation.
Be those unmoveable, knit, as wall of flint,
Whereon unstable worlds dark waves shall break,
In vain. The Land 's not worthy of thém !

OBERON. Say on,
Father : we elves would linger, till days light,
And take no keep of aught besides ; to hear
Of such.

TRUTH. Are they of every trade of life,
Therein assured, though consecrate to death.
Some, as daylabourers, travail in rough weed ;
And many are tradesmen in the market place.
Other are learnéd men, gentry, magistrates.
Soldiers are many, armies some command :
Nor fewer sail the seas, in the Kings ships ;
Or trade, for livelihood, in the merchant fleet.
Nor may, by dark death, be left desolate
Their homes, nor their bereaved ones be undone :
Seeing those are succoured of a Common Fund ;
And have they strong Protectors, great just ones ;
Of dígnity and high office in the Land ;

THE CLIFFS

(Being also Captains in their Sacred Band.)

Ye shall them all see glad-eyed ; 't is a sign
Whereby that Sacred Fellowship may be known ;
As in whose faithful breasts, beat hearts of kings ;
And burns pure stedfast flame of sacrifice !

ELVES. Father, these words sound sweeter in our ears,
Than honeycombs. And though we be but elves,
Among Earth-folk, in three-square Isle of Britain :
We who as smiths, in forging cunning tools,
Excell, would aiding be to those mensons ;
And by them fight, gainst all outlandish wights,
For our home-rocks, hills, bowers, bents, heaths
and woods.

TRUTH. His part to every brother is assigned ;
And that according to his several gift :
Who speak with tongues, station in foreign Lands.
For Britains safeguard, are they, eyes and ears.

Not known unto the many ; are they aye ready,
Able to take charge, as an ordered army ;
When all shall fail, that 's constituted in the State,
Of Britain, in day of Her enemies.

Is brother known to brother, by *Teslem*,
(Their word, which signifies, To-the-last-man !)
And certain countersign. An hierophant,
Behold, is coming from the Temple forth ;

THE CLIFFS

And golden Book bears open in his hand :
Wherein their names, which have achieved for Eng-
land,
Surpassing deeds, be chronicled in gold.
Is this a night of their solemnities,
The next from the full Moon. Who follow him,
Those girt in linen stoles, are Novices.

(Enter an hierophant of the Sacred Brotherhood, with two Captains, bearing drawn swords ; the Novices following. All bow the knee before that Sacred Image, as they pass. They descend then from the Temple steps ; and stand together in the open space, before the Altar.)

FIRST CAPTAIN. Hath every soul, to be initiate here,
His Sponsor ?

NOVICES. We ETERNAL TRUTH all take
To witness ! *(TRUTH assents with his head.)*

HIEROPHANT. Answer, every one of you :
What is that Star of Glory, towards which march
We brethren, each one in that Sacred Path
Of duty, over all obstacles, till his death ?

NOVICES. SANCTA BRITANNIA MOTHER, that STAR is.
*(A basket of mould is brought to them by the second Cap-
tain. They each then, one after another, kiss it ; and
taking thereof, they sprinkle some upon their heads.)*

THE CLIFFS

HIEROPH. Kiss death! and covet all to die for
Britain.

And have ye watched and endured weariness,
Withheld your souls, and schooled to sufferance
Of all extremities; manful to contend
With the rebukes of Fortune?

NOVICES. We have.

HIEROPH. Read

Then Captains, in their ears, our Articles.

FIRST CAPT. Wilt thou, Britannias Champion, thou
alone,

Contend, with the whole World of flesh and
spirit;

To the uttermost of human sufferance?

ALL, (*with loud voices.*) Yea!

SECOND CAPT. Wilt thou, to safeguard Britain, abide
death?

NOVICES, (*lifting each one his hands, towards the Sacred
Image.*) Of Thee, Great Mother, I was born
to death.

Thy child, I embrace Thy reverend knees; I kiss
Thy feet! Britannia Mother, sweet it were;
For Thee, to die.

HIEROPH. What dost thou only fear?

NOVICES. Britains dishonour.

THE CLIFFS

HIEROPH. (*who stoops now, and takes up a sharp flint.*)

What doth signify,

This ?

NOVICES. Covert thing : that her sacred soil pollute

No insolent new Porsenna, with his foot.

HEROPH. Remember, to keep close the Brotherhoods

Rule ;

And not reveal it to the froward sort.

In sign whereof ; lift to this sword, each one,

His hands.

(They do so.)

HIEROPH. And wilt thou jeopardy thine own soul,

To snatch thy semblable from the jaws of death ?

NOVICES. God helping us ; we shall endeavour this.

HIEROPH. Chasten thine heart, take heed unto thy
speech ;

That not one unconsidered idle word

Pass pale-row of thy teeth. Sooth thou shalt speak,

Save to deceive thy Nations enemies.

Bridle that perverse mule-beast of the flesh,

Whereon, in much disquietude, doth ride

Mans soul to honour : that, through your clear life,

All evil living were the more despised.

(They all assent, in devoutly raising their right hands.)

HIEROPH. Under these swords, pass, in Britannias name :

THE CLIFFS

I ADMIT YOU BRETHREN. Steep before you lies,
Of Britains Band, the Sacred Path, henceforth.

*(The new brothers pass, under the Captains' swords, joined
above their heads : and go three times thus round
about Britannias Altar. Dispersed then, some re-
ascend into the Temple. Other, with the hiero-
phant, sit down on the Altar steps. Then a new
company of a few souls of excelling stature, issue
from the Temple ; and they remain standing, on
either hand of Britannias Image, in the pillared
porch.)*

ELVES. What souls be these, of so exceeding stature ?
Which, with stooped heads, must pass the Temple-
port.

TRUTH. Proconsuls, captains, magistrates ; that were
given,

Elect souls, in these last days, from high Heaven ;
Unto safeguarding of this Island Nation.

Than these souls, none in Britains ages past,
Have greater been, in arts of war and peace.

AN ELF. I'll run and fetch my astrolabe and cross-staff ;
(I'm a ships elf,) to take their right ascension,
Their altitude and the common declination.

Great Pilots those ! I know them, by their looks !

ELVES. Seven be come forth.

THE CLIFFS

TRUTH. A Pleiades lo of great

Good and just souls ; whose high celestial spirits
Were breathéd from the stars. (*Pointing to the
Temple.*) They have therein,

Now council holden, for the Mother Nation.

Are those, in bones and flesh, the living rocks ;

Which ward from foreign harms, the foster Coast.

This People, if they would hear them, might be
saved !

*(Those noble souls, standing thus in the Temple-porch,
with constant gaze, look gravely forth.)*

ELVES. How stedfastly into the World they look !

TRUTH. Hath Britain ever been upheld and saved,
Not by Her mány ; but through few great souls,
As these ; men, whose age-long enduring names,
Be graven upon Britannias Temple-stones.

*(Those heaven-given souls re-enter the Temple. A
new Company of Elves arrive ; and they fling
down with loathing, a rusty clout. Is that a
swart banner, embreued with human gore.)*

THE NEW-COME ELVES. Hicing far up and down
Worlds paths tonight,

We found this new-fallen, from the dreary clutch

Of Monster, horrible, hideous, huge ; in part,

Dissolved, that noisome lay, like belched-forth cloud ;

THE CLIFFS

From homicide cannons mouth, on wide waste field.

TRUTH. What hour, my trusty elves, came this to pass ?

ELVES. When risen was, after dewfall, the Moons face,
High as mens housetops.

SOME ELVES. Was not then we marked ?

Britannias Temple-Image gleam more bright !

OTHER ELVES. Away with this abominable clout ;

That stinks like toadstools rotten in dank woods.

THE NEW ELVES. Can any elf read, what is smeared
upon it ?

TRUTH. In human gore !

ROBIN. I 've well-nigh spelled it out.

Letters of Eavesdrop, who of Paigle had it,

I in a midsummer night, learned in the woods.

He with his finger, traced them in the sand

There, in Moonshine. I read this word, SEDITION !

MOTH. I 've heard, that She, from town to town, had
stalked,

In the last days ; and through wide Country-side :

And though stood grown her hairs up, through her
hood,

She, sluttish harlot, many lovers found.

Ten thousand highway-beaters followed her,

Sludges of men and shame of woman kind ;

The Nations lees and dregs.

THE CLIFFS

ROBIN. Manseeding weeds ;

And spawning queens, that under hedgerows lodge.

MOTH. Deformed, depraved, an abject multitude ;

A mortal squalor creeping in their veins ;

Numbed, drenched, the daily madness of their souls,

In deadly penury and the poison drink.

NEW ELVES. And they which lately acclaimed her, with
loud cries ;

Now fallen, all breath from her foul carrion ceased,

Rank heinous starveling routs, lament around.

There we were, merry elves, untaught to laugh !

TRUTH. How chanced it, that lies fell SEDITION slain ?

NEW ELVES. From Sunset, loud enfeigned droves
marched forth,

Like foul-breathed revellers, with husk knavish
throats ;

To go o'er to the enemies of the Nation,

And sink the ship they swim in. Seemed creep with
them

The fair fields, in first twilight. We heard then

A VOICE, with holy harmony, fall from heaven.

TRUTH. Was that the new found HARMONY OF THE
NATION !

NEW ELVES. And we, slain by the wayside, without
sword,

THE CLIFFS

Saw fallen SEDITION, in the throes of death :
And soon from her vile carcase passed the breath.

(Enter another Company of elves.)

THE LAST-COME ELVES. We lope last night far forth ;
till where we met

With Northern Brownies, skipping from Belwood.
Those raced with us, to see who fleetest footed.

Day rose, as we ran all, through a great town.
Wherein we halted ; fearing thát, if see us
Running, should risen wheel of Everglow ;
We might be changed, under his envious looks,
To stones. To shroud them, Brownies took form
on them

Of hounds. We three elves, masking then in shapes
Of sparrows, sate hour-long upon cold stone,
Set up amidst mens cheaps, shaped like a man ;
Or mannikin on a pedestal turned to stone.

We all things marked, that passed in sunless streets,
Unchristened market-places. Ofttimes saw
We humans faint, for lack of nourishment ;
Though cattle went by sleek and in good point.
Mens full-fed parliamentarians make light count
Of such ; how they might grow up citizens.

Degenerate so and blemished were their looks ;
That seemed those hardly men of Saxon race :

THE CLIFFS

Yet many bare stout hearts, in hollow chests,
Stout British hearts! For when they, in mens
streets,

Heard trumpet bray, and call for Volunteers ;
And proclamation made the magistrates :
From holes and cellars creeping fiercely forth,
Those clamoured, that were armed to war their
hands.

For their Stepmother Britain, those would fight ;
Wherein they had, ah, inherited little part !

Fell then murk mist ; midafternoon seemed night,
Already : and we elves hastily parted forth ;
That headlong running, home are come again.

TRUTH, (*with solemn voice.*) Children, stand close ; for
an ambrosial breath

Of everlasting SPIRITS, I perceive !

(*A great Light approacheth in heaven, before return-
ing SIRION ; Who in a rainbow Glory descendeth
anew to height of Britannias Temple-roof. And in
the same the great golden and azure winged EONS,
each arriving from his part, alight ; and station, as
before-while, upon the two borders of the Temple-
steps.*)

SIRION. Leaving anew yond sliding borneless Deep,
Celestial Steep of Stars, which doth embrace

THE CLIFFS

Low circuit of this Earthworlds day and night ;
And passed the last supernal Gates of Light,
I, from the aetherian brow of heaven stooped ;
Again touch to Earths air and human shore.

Strong SPIRIT of my Left Hand, hast thou sur-
viewed

Britains sea-isle ?

SHEMÔL. Her, I have cities seen,

Of living dead, and field o'ergrown with briars !

SIRION. And what, Swiftspeeding SPIRIT of my Right
Hand,

Beheld thine eyes, on Earthstars mould around,
Mans dwelling-place, World green with grass and
woods.

YAMÎN. Beyond Earthstars first deep, I, Lord, flew
forth ;

And from on-height all living things surviued :

And saw, yet, on her mountain-hedged plains,

And isles, mens sons, bearing forth homicide arms.

None such moves, on Earth's face, dark-hearted
beast !

Nay, and worthier to be men, and they had speech

And hands, Lord, many beasts were, on Earths
ground !

Aye, and creeping things. In politics of the bees,

And pismires, more good order have I seen.

THE CLIFFS

SIRION. And what hast thou, O Britains Truth, in the
Isle,

Discerned, of that I left to thee commanded.

TRUTH. Hail to thee, King of heavens high shining
paths !

Since when Thy Power fell on me, holy SIRION,
I tried have and examined, this last night.

Labouring with me mine elves, mens gathered Spirits;
And we have proved them in our balances.

And High One, lacking we did find the most ;

Souls of no profit to a Commonwealth,

More than dead men. We hardly, in a third part,

Aught found might weigh with their unworthiness.

SIRION. YET ONCE ! for that thirds sake ; shall be
preserved :

And not for tardy remiss suppliant press

Of mens hands, lifted up to heavens height ;

(In hope that th' army of heaven might for them fight !

Heaven them forsakes, that will not help themselves.)

This Island Nation. Lo, this day, shall stand

My Power betwixt them and their enemies.

SHEMÔL. I have their adversaries, until now, withheld.

SIRION. Watch o'er her seas ; be guardian of the Isle.

And thou, what sawest Thou more, O mighty Angel,

Of my Right Hand ?

YAMÎN. Lord of the rolling spheres,

THE CLIFFS

From brief night-shadow of Earths reeling round,
I flew to lightsome border of Worlds day,
New-born eternally ; where all clouds discussed,
On outstraught wings, in blue vast loft, I lay :
And saw this Earthworld under roll. I viewed,
In many daylight Lands, Isle Britains sons ;
To Sister Nations grown, beyond the sea.

Was in those Daughter Lands and Isles far off,
Felt mighty pulse of Britains Mother-heart,
Mans message under weight of infinite flood,
Immensity of salt deep, passed in a moment :

SAIL FOREIGN ARMIES, BRITAIN TO INVADE.

Went up Great Cry : the haunts of merchandise,
Were shut. With burning hearts, in haste, assembled
Then citizen throngs, in hundred market-places ;
To hear the words of whoso best could speak.

I lookéd West, I lookéd East ; beneath
I a Séa-Isle 's hastily assembled Parliament,
Beheld : wherein all acclaimed with one voice !
The lofty heart-compelling words, that sounded,
From manful lips of their first magistrate ;
Propounding, that their Colony should send forth
Tenth part of all her manhood, taught to arms ;
To succour, Midst-of-Empire, Mother Britain.

As for himself, laid down all offices ;

THE CLIFFS

At morrows dawn, he and his only son,
Both Captains, in the Empires Sacred Band,
Bearing their rifles and full bandoliers,
Would sail for home. Left speaking, he stood down:
And all rose up to greet him ; who, ' farewell ! '
Saying, to each one, amidst the hall, passed forth.

Straightway the Resolution carried was.
It passed then, without one dissentient voice,
Through both their houses : and whilst leapt mens
hearts ;

To widows and all orphans of this war,
Were voted pensions ; and to all maimed soldiers.

The Parliaments ordinance, flasht by telegraph was,
To each hamlet, town and homestead in the State.
Men made them ready, on whom the Sacred Lot
Was fallen, to Empire-Warfare, all that night ;
And I breathed on them, an upholding Spirit.

I saw at dayspring sally, at trumpets note,
From thousand doors, men armed. Their wives
there kissed,

They, and little ones ; and descended to embark.
I saw the first take ship ; and from Sea Gates,
Then, their tall warbound prows rush eager forth ;
Spurning of surges, infinite as the wind-
Kissed leaves, that ruffle in a forest side,

THE CLIFFS

The illimitable flood ; in fewest days,
Through force and iron throb of giant engines,
Seas Gulf, to Britains Home-land, to o'erpass.

I viewed Earth's compass, ever rolling forth :
And on both sides, where offspring of her blood,
New Nations speak the tongue of Mother Britain,
Much ferment was : great vessels on steep seas,
Speeding ; which warships, like a flock, conveyed ;
Each one bears thousand soldiers. Were their courses
Laid, under one proud flag, for Mother Britain.

*(Patriot souls, men and women from the Oversea Nation
Provinces of Britains world-wide Empire, (Canadians,
Australians, New Zealanders, South-Africans,
and othermore,) arrive ; and enter the Sacred Pre-
cinct. Men, bare-headed, go forth to lay war-gifts
upon the steps of the Altar. Women then approach-
ing, offer and cast thereon more Sacred Incense.)*

A MANS VOICE. We of the DAUGHTER NATIONS, SISTER
STATES,

Britannia, of Thy WORLD-EMPIRE, midst this HOME
ISLE, stand before Thee, round THINE ALTAR here :
ISLE to us sacred dear.

ALL VOICES. ISLE to us sacred dear !

THE MANS VOICE. Wherein the fathers' graves. They
brothers were.

THE CLIFFS

ALL. They brothers were !

THE MANS VOICE. They were one MOTHERS SONS.

ALL VOICES. We their sons are.

THE MANS VOICE. Over this holy stone, we here knit
hands.

ALL. Over this holy stone all we knit hands !

(They all join hands.)

THE MAN, *(lifting his eyes to Britannias Image.)* Our
fathers loved, they revered THEE before.

ALL. Our children love, they reverence THEE with us !

We love, we all réverence THEE, our ONE GREAT
MOTHER !

ANOTHER VOICE. MOTHER of NATIONS, fostered at
THY breast :

We stand this day before THEE, in bright arms ;

Strong to maintain THY CAUSE derived to us.

ALL. Strong to maintain THY RIGHT, derived to us.

A THIRD VOICE. ONE DESTINY is ours ; and burns in
all our breasts ;

Wherein Her blood beats, one aspiring flame,

To succour THEE, our MOTHER ISLE of BRITAIN :

ALL. That SHE, our PARENT SOIL, were not oppressed,
By hostile swarms of envious aliens.

THE THIRD VOICE. Sprung of one WOMB, sons
nourished at Her BREAST,

THE CLIFFS

ALL. We foster-brethren are, in life and death !

THE VOICE. Though seem a sea-gulfs thousand welter-
ing leagues

To separate :

ALL. Can those never sever us !

THE VOICE. Bridges that Ocean floor nowspeaking wire.

ALL. Brother can, in a flash, call unto brother.

WOMEN, (*approaching.*) Britannia MOTHER, we today
bring gifts,

In aid to rear this EMPIRE-TEMPLE up.

We are thy daughters' daughters ; we have borne
And brought up children MOTHER, in Thy Name.

And round our hearths, which be beyond the seas,
We daily worship, towards this holy HOUSE.

(*They cast on more sacred Incense. Again is heard
sound, as of a far-off celestial Music.*)

SIRION. I reascend, to rule the timeless stars,

And everlasting currents of the Spheres.

Leaving, Strong SPIRITS, to you on Earthstars ground,
To ward Isle Britain from her enemies.

And further leave I TRUTH to Thee in charge ;
That were Britannias brow tonight unbound.

TRUTH. I will, HIGH RULER of a thousand spheres,
Aye rolling forth, to never-ending years,

THE CLIFFS

Take thought for this.

SIRION. The Lord will send a trumpet ;
Shall sound, in the hearts of men !

TRUTH. Beseech Thee, soon !

That the Household of this Nation wake and live.

(SIRION *ascendeth through the Earth-clouds : the two mighty EONS remaining fade from view. Touching him with his bowstaff then, TRUTH awakens the hierophant ; who risen gazeth forth, towards the Temple ; and women-souls affiliated to the Empire-Sacred-Band, appear, (some ones bearing babes in their arms,) in the Sacred Porch ; then they troop down together. TRUTH, with a sign, showeth how Britannias Image is still blindfold. Elves kindle fire with a flint ; and they then sit down to warm themselves thereat.*)

HIEROPHANT, (*looking round upon them.*) Who is there,
who, among you, Sister-women ;
Being widow, from her maidenhood, of one man ;
Will, for Britannia, give to heaven again,
Her darling joy, her only infant son ?
For the life of this Nation to be dead !
Who is there, who ? Is Destiny, (I have received
This word tonight from heaven !) that may unbind
Her brow, none but a manchild's infant hand.
And in that doing, he must die, O women !

THE CLIFFS

WOMEN-SOULS' VOICES. We, mothers, will not spare to
die for Britain,

GREAT MOTHER ; nor to give for Her our children !
Only, thou hierophant, cast equal lots.

(A sound of womens sighing.)

WIDOW CHARITY. I one have loved, O Heaven, my
husband dead !

Who captain, (like as ere my father was,)

Lord, served before Thee, in our Sacred Band.

My father perished, in a great sea-tempest ;

Tempting shipwrecked to save and drowning men.

Thus life is, through our deaths, born to this Nation !

(Lifting the babe in her arms.) Behold, men, women,
and Heaven ! our Heaven-given

One little Son : is this our only babe ;

Born in hour, when his father laid on bier ;

(For he his life had given, and would have more,

Had that been possible, snatching lives from fire ;)

Was borne forth from our chamber, to the grave.

He who looks now from better life, in heaven ;

Did yearn our offspring, and were that a son,

Should give one day also, his life, for Britain !

And dying had caused him, being yet unborn,

To be enrolled an infant of the Band.

Husband, rejoice the more, in bliss of heaven ;

THE CLIFFS

If by our one loved child, now to be given
Again for Britain, to all-giving Heaven,
This night ; might be preserved the NATIONS
children.

*(A distant sound of Celestial Music. The Overseas'
Women again, approaching the Altar, cast on more
sacred Incense.)*

HIEROPH. Draw lots before Britannia, Sister women !
(The Women of the Band cast sacred lots.)

WIDOW CHARITY. 'T is mine, the lot is mine ! (Smiles
my sweet babe !)

Thy life, though of few days, shall, little son,
Avail for England more than her hoar heads.

O that, instead of his, mine might be given !

An hundred times I would it give again :

And that for every soul in Land of Britain !

HIEROPH. Say sister, by these holy stars above ;
Dost thou give, for our Nation, him to heaven ?

WIDOW CHARITY. My husbands soul him gave ; I give
to heaven :

Himself, with smiles, he gives.

HIEROPH. Is not this Son,
Yet suckling in thine arms, thou widow woman,
That babe ye sought, with tears and sighs of
heaven,

THE CLIFFS

These many years, till-to thy middle age ?
How mightest thou then endure, after his death,
To see the sunlight ? Daughter, think on this !
Or who shall succour thy late feeble age ?

WIDOW CHARITY. Son is he of my sighing : but in
heaven,

Unto whom we obey, without a worldly thought,
I trust ; for dwelleth therein All-righteousness !

I gladly, to achieve that which we owe,
We, which called Sisters of the Sacred Path,
To Thee Britannia, choose it, for my part,
In happy tears, to lead my life henceforth ;
Though I should daily ashes eat for bread,
And suffer therein all extremities.

WOMEN-SOULS' VOICES. SANCTÁ BRITANNIA ! BRITANNIA !
*(Whilst elves now rear their ladder up before the Sacred
Image, WIDOW CHARITY tenderly kisseth many
times her little son, and presseth him to her bosom.
Then she mounts the first rungs with courage.)*

WIDOW CHARITY, *(on the ladder.)* Bless, everliving
Heaven, my little Son !

And when the wimple his babe hands have loosed,
FATHER of Spirits, receive again his breath !

*(Fervently, for the last time, she kisseth her babe-son ;
and so uplifts him to helm-height of the Sacred Image.)*

THE CLIFFS

The babe, with his infant hands, undoeth the thick veil upon Britannias brow ; and the wimple falls then from her to ground.

WIDOW CHARITY, takes again to her bereaved bosom, her dead child ; and descends with sighing. Sister women gather to her, weeping. Elves rake that fallen veil upon their burning hearth ; wherein it is presently consumed.)

VOICES OF WEEPING WOMEN. Dear fading flower, like severed bud, alas !

OTHER WOMENS VOICES. Sweet babe, he may not wake!

WIDOW CHARITY. Sleep little flesh,

Lie on thy mothers breast !

WOMEN. Those rosebud lips,

May no more smile !

WIDOW CHARITY. Whose cradle-kiss was like

Warm sunbreath, wafted from the daisy grass.

WOMEN. Must worms fret this dear flesh !

WIDOW CHARITY. Ah, angel-face !

That, Lord, was like a blossom on Thine Earth.

Soon Thou hast taken him.

OTHER WOMEN. He fades, alas !

WIDOW CHARITY. He is returned to heaven.

WOMEN. And must be laid,

WIDOW CHARITY. Ah ! Lord of Life !

THE CLIFFS

WOMEN. In mould, in dark grave earth ;
Today, away from us, his little earth !

(WIDOW CHARITY, *still bearing in her bosom her dead child, is led away amongst them. Britannias Image increaseth in majesty and brightness. Her trident gleams with a living light. Souls gather joyful to her pedestal. Ghosts of former ages remain reverently gazing on apart.*)

TRUTH. In nothing, doth this simple widow wife
Fall short of Worlds heroic ages past.

Thus only, through mens freely offering up
The best of all they have, may be preserved,
(Which subject to decay,) a Nations State.

Would, after his ability, each one do such ;
This Kingdom should be stablished as the rocks.

ELVES. And we elves of pure life, whose dwelling is,
In bowers under dark clod, clefts, caves of rocks ;
Part mourn, as touched with sense of mans distress ;
And part, for Britain, we this night rejoice.

She widow shall not want, whilst elves can work :
We would we might, in honey of wild bees,
Embalm her blossom babe ; whose little mound
Will elves each Summer night, bestrew with flowers.

Elf maids and wives, shall of their best gleaned
wool,

THE CLIFFS

Spin for her and weave Winter kirtles warm.
Whilst she doth slumber, they will deck the house ;
And by her widows bedshead watch, to wipe
Away all springing tears, when she shall wake.

Each morrow, on her threshold, she shall find,
Butter of milk, set in our creaming pans,
Which elves, their part, have drawn from the kines
dugs,

As they couch in the field ; and birds' wild eggs ;
That elves, from neath the feathered mothers'
breasts,

Have filched ; whilst those sit drowsing on their
nests.

And when is season in of fruits, we 'll leave
Woodcherries on her lattice window-sill ;
And berries ripe of field, and honeycombs ;
Cool salads daily. And, in Winter waste,
(When elves eat acorns singéd in the glede,
With roasted crabs, drink of warm whig, and cheese ;)
Hot manchets baked of mast, on our hearth-
stones.

And éach day we, will fill the widows house,
With gathered sunbeams, that it aye may smile.
And money we shall bring her, now and then :
Of faery gold, which elves know in the hills ;

THE CLIFFS

And all shall prosper round her and be clean.

(The mighty winged EONS return ; and they alight, as before, upon the two borders of the Temple steps.)

SHEMÔL. AN ARROW OF THE ALMIGHTY HATH ATTAINED
THE RULER OF PERSANIA ; AND HATH THEIR NAVY
NEW MESSAGE IN THE AIR RECALLED TO LAND.

THOU ALSO BRITAIN, RESPITE AND HEARTH-REST,
YET ONCE MORE, HAST !

YAMÎN. PRAY, THAT THE LORD, FROM HEAVEN,
MAY SEND YOU AGAIN QUICKLY ANGEL ALBION ! ¹

*(In the human dawn, which now springeth, the Night
Vision fadeth away.)*

¹ *The Dawn in Britain*, ii. 107.

PART V

*Which lingering improvidence of our men, hath been
their overthrow.*

HAKLUYT.

PART V

(Claybourne Village green, before the Sun Inn. A quick-firer gun is drawn in, by soldiers ; and so placed as to enfilade the cross ways. COMMANDER PAKENHAM, the VICAR and SURGEON are seen, sipping early coffee together, seated at a table, set before the door of the Inn.

SIR ROBERT BOND arrives ; and then an Intelligence Officer. HEARTY, Coastguard ; Yeomen, Villagers, and others.)

(Enter SIR ROBERT BOND and one of his mariners.)

SIR R. BOND. Give you good morrow, gentlemen !

How have you

Passed Captain, in the Village, the night hours ?

Were none alarms ?

COMM. Until some hour ago ;

I with my village watchers, went the rounds.

Then I'm ashamed to own, that sitting down,

Here, in this elbow-chair, before the Inn ;

I drowsed, and fell asleep for weariness.

Will you not drink your coffee here with us ?

THE CLIFFS

(SIR R. BOND *sits down at table with them ; and more cups are brought out.*)

COMM. How fared you at the Gap ?

SIR R. BOND. The wind increased

To a sharp squall ; which after midnight fell.

Then we put off, the morning watch to pass,

On board the yacht : but are there any news ?

COMM. I hardly know ; all night we 've been cut off :
Were telegrams to headquarters only sent.

SURG. I marvel, that the enemies come not yet !

SIR R. BOND. Maybe, they steer new course, to baffle us.

(*Enter POSTMISTRESS DOWELL, with a dispatch.*)

POSTM. Communication Sir 's restored to us.

COMM. (*reading from the telegram.*) ' British steam-
trawlers, which put in tonight,

To Grimsby Haven, report ; none enemy warships
Were sighted, on the high seas from their course.

The Admiralty hope, that steaming at high speed ;

The combined Channel and Atlantic fleets

May round the Lizard, by the fall of night.'

They 've doubtless many wireless *grams* received.
And though 't is all an huge enigma yet,

Wherefor the enemies come not : my mind gives

Me, I cannot tell why ; that War will be averted !

(*Turning to the SURG.*) A comfortable dew descended is,

THE CLIFFS

New cheerfulness, as of sunbeams, on my spirit ;
With sleep of cares ; like to that Autumns calm,
Which steeps the field, before crude Winter falls.

(*Turning to the VICAR.*) What know I, if beyond this

VISIBLE ;

When still for ever, in the clay-cold corse,
Is our warm pulse ; there aught await our spirits !

Manby, I saw in dream, my buried one ;
Stand roudous, in her marriage-garment white.
Full were her speaking eyes of heavens light :
Her gentle lips seemed whisper, without voice,
Word, which she last did speak, on her death night ;
PEACE ! in that from my yearning gaze she faded.

SURG. I muse, what shall this new risen Sun bring forth?

COMM. I dare affirm, that Claybourne Cliffs are safe.

(*Turning to SIR R. BOND.*) You may have seen my
boatmen were warned back,

When fallen the squall, they rowed out in their boat ;
To speak a craft they 'd sighted in the moonlight.
They 've now sent Hearty up to me, to report.

It seems, 't was one of our submersible Coast-craft ;
That gave the Admiralty sign, number and name,
And countersign ; and her Commanders name ;
But warned them back to land. They mines laid out,

THE CLIFFS

No bigger, Hearty tells, than fishermens floats,
That seemed of glass; and sown like thick long shore.
Kratite, our new explosive, 's in them sealed;
That being electrised, through a beam of light,
Can thickest ironsides shiver of huge warships!
There could none enemy land now at the Gap;
Where but one buoyed five-fathom Channel's left,
For fisher boats and ketches.

SIR R. BOND. There 's enough
Then, that my yacht might pass. Were any breath
To spring; and you 've Sir none occasion for us;
We 'd weigh, and stand to lay up in the Yare,
Or in the Lothing; for my Suffolk men
Are asking to be paid off and go home.

COMM. If any warship, steaming Southward, pass;
I 'll signal, asking her to give you a tow.
Then shall my boatmen pull you off the shore:
'T were safest to do so.

SIR R. BOND. I thank you Sir.
And may I, Captain Pakenham, hope; that when
Shall passed, please Heaven, be this now nightmare fear
Of war; and you 've some spare weekend, or more:
You 'll honour us, it spending at my house.
You 'll Saxstead Hall find, in the way to Norwich;
From hence, not an hours driving in your motor.

THE CLIFFS

Your hostess there, shall be mine aged mother ;
Whose talk is yet of the Peninsular War !
Wherein her soldier uncles served with honour.
None, she thinks, with those heroes may compare.

COMM. I thank you ; and I will it bear in mind.

Twixt yachtsmen and us navy officers,
There is a kindred feeling of the sea.
Where 's Eric ?

SIR R. BOND. Sick on board,
I left him now.

HEARTY. He 've broke their only boat, Sir !

SIR R. BOND. Since here Hearty
Has spoken of it, I must tell you more.

Eric was sleeping, after midnight watch,
On deck : a ripple seemed, at the chain cable,
To startle him. He, still slumbering, stood up, looked
Over the counter : and thence he all suddenly outleapt,
Plumped in our skiff, that towing was longside !
There like a berserker, so in furious mood,
He shouted, that he could not hear our voices !
Striding then the stern-sheets, he with an oar,
The thwarts to flinders, beat : that, to the stumps,
Broken ; he laid about him, with another.
He banged ; till my boat, loosened the aft strakes,

THE CLIFFS

Now making water fast, began to sink.

We, looking on from deck, might nothing do !

Tripped backward, Eric fell óverboard ; and he
plashed

Like heavy salmon leaping in the river !

He struck out then and swam strong as an otter.

And seemed him, he saved many drowning men ;

Gear, lifebelts, handspikes, cushions, we flung to him !

When his seaboots began to draw him under ;
And gain he felt on him the lean cold water ;

He slowly coming to himself, (was running

A tide then,) swam t' our chain, and hanging on ;

He looked amazed about him, in the stream !

So came your coastguard, racing in their cutter,
Which, at our shouts to shore, had they manned out :

And like a seal, they heaved and lugged him in ;

(Who failing then, could no more help himself ;)

And brought aboard, all running down with water !

He saw us, as they stayed him up the ladder ;

And looked strange, as he came over the side ;

He drew breath heavily : panted his great chest ;

Sobs shook the man : he went below to strip.

Seems, he 'd been a dream-walker, times before.

We all then came, to take him by the hand ;

Whereat appeased ; and when he had received

THE CLIFFS

Some warming drink, he shut his wildered eyes ;
Murmuring, that would have enemies taken the
Thrush !

I left him quiet, sleeping in his berth.

(Enter an Intelligence Officer, with a telegram open in his hand.)

INTELL. OFF. *(saluting.)* Was this transmitted, over
our field wire,

From Somerfield Camp : I think it 's for you Sir.

COMM. *(returning his salute.)* From th' Admiralty :
thank you !

I will read it out.

' London, (this morning :) The *Osprey* and *Drake*,
scout ships,

Sent forth to reconnoitre, with lights dowsed,
Last night, report : The Enemies battle-fleet
Put back. In that their two lines went about ;
Stumbling on their own mines, two greatest Dread-
noughts ;

Rent, by tremendous then explosions ; foundered !
With drowning thousand-cry of mangled lives !
Running aboard each other, full of soldiers,
Three convoyed transports foundered !

VICAR. GOD of armies !

The Hand I see of Heaven, in all this !

THE CLIFFS

Yet let us not rejoice, for those mens deaths.

SURG. These are great news indeed.

GODWIN *and* FREEMAN. So do we say.

VILLAGERS. May we, that have our livelihoods yet to get,

After this night Sir, now go home to breakfast ?

(Exeunt some Villagers.)

GODWIN. Might their Invasion be delayed few weeks ;

Our Brothers should from overseas arrive.

INTELL OFF. The King received two cablegrams, in the
night ;

That, at that hour, the first of them embarked,

In the South Seas. In Canada, great swift ships,

Full of militia soldiers, have steam up ;

Whom powerful convoy joins, for their sea voyage.

VICAR. Tidings indeed !

COMM. Great tidings !

SIR R. BOND. Hip, hurrah !

Well I a day remember, in my youth,

When, at Southampton, head of Ocean paths,

I one of her great line-ships saw arrive.

Was hardly berthed the *Marathon* at quayside,

(The great sea creature lay, all motion ceased,

House-high, with gilded prow, against the land ;

Her funnels smoking yet, after long voyage ;)

THE CLIFFS

When swarmed down to the wharf, her passengers.
Seemed some as men which had forgot their minds!
So did those smile and nod and laugh unto us.
As we nigh kindred were. Might be, we were
Not born, when they left Home! In that they passed;
Those toucht our stripling hands. All whom they
met,
They greeted thus : tears stood in many faces !
Then knew I, lay, beyond the circle of
Sea-flood, Fair Lands ; which peopled British hearts :
And that no world of waves can separate us !

INTELL. OFF. I in thé War-Cóuncil, last night, heard
discoursed ;
How bring the Southsea British unto us,
New war Invention ; which, all seem it but
A transitory light, they say, is able
To pass through thickest armoured belts of warships !
And numb their crews. Canada to Britain sends
A valiant army of her sons ; young men
Sound of their limbs, and sighted well to shoot ;
Auxiliary batteries, and besides such horse
As cannot be excelled ; and certain engine,
Called *Katera*, bring those with them of destruction ;
That, like chain shot, unfolds from cannons mouth ;

THE CLIFFS

And, at leagues distance, can bring down a regiment!
(*A newsboy cyclist goes by, with a pamphlet in his hand,
singing. FREEMAN calls to him.*)

NEWSBOY. Sold out Sir, all sold out! I've not one *piper*
Left, I'm now from the Camp. I'll have to-
morrow (*He dismounts.*)

More than ten times as many; if still stand England!
I might have truckloads sold! and yet great bales
Came down from Smiths: but thick arms, in a
moment,

Them all caught up. It showered half-crowns, it
shillings

Rained, which flung hundred hands to me for pennies!

Coats I saw rent; almost I was myself

Troddown amongst them. None of them would wait,
Save one old gentleman, somewhat thick of hearing,
Well-paunched, in waistcoat white, to take his
change;

He'd count it too; said he, for conscience sake.

And I've a pretty fortune; all that silver!

Which silver I'll again give to the War;

When I tomorrow goes a Volunteer.

I think I've yet some broadside, in my sack,
Left: you may read this *gratis* Sirs.

(*He draws it forth.*)

THE CLIFFS

SURG. What 's that ?

FREEMAN. The *Daily Liar* : I know it by the colour.

NEWSB. Yet all what she today Sir says, is true.

GODWIN, (*reading.*) ATTEMPTED LANDING. ENEMY
BEATEN BACK.

IN YORKSHIRE. FLEET WRECKED OF PERSANIAN AIR-
SHIPS.

INTELL. OFF. Foreseen were some diversions in the
North ;

Though 't is the heart of England those would strike.

FREEMAN. What heard you tell, lad ?

NEWSB. Sailed some sloop-of-war.

The old penny gentleman, with poppy face,
Wiping round all that bald foretop of his ;
And swelling with hot anger, read it out.

FREEMAN. Lad, read what out ?

NEWSB. Well, I can't tell you what ;

Till you have told me what a warsloop is.

I am a cockney, born and bred : she is

A ship, as I can guess, that sleeps (as seems

The Country here,) or slips ; as we see on Thames
Mud brinks, do many a wherry, barge and lighter.

Enters this sloop Hull haven, disguised, last night.

Our searchlights soon discovered her ; and her
boarded

THE CLIFFS

Naval Reservists of the merchant-service ;
That took her, with their only cutlasses ;
And stopped the music of her cannons' mouths.
Yet not ere she torpedoes had discharged ;
(Which blew up a great sight of muddy water !)
And let down drifting mines, which sailed inshore.
The enemy hoped, if they our town and shipping
Might burn; to give their folks good light for landing!

That next line tells of enemy airships' fleet ;
How cast were many away in squall and tempest,
At sea ; which could not stem the windy gusts.
Some other fought, that topt the English Cliffs,
With windmills, lightning rods, and weathercocks'
Sharp beaks ; and most-whiles had the worse. Some
bounced

On trees ; and féll down loads of enemies ; like as
At bedtime, cockchafers do. Some hanged them-
selves,

On telegraph wires. Marksmen, in motor cars,
Balloons, like footballs, hopping on the ground,
Pursue. And some, which dropped explosives on us,
And chemical shells, destroying life and breath ;
They 've passing in the moonlight, in the sky,
Winged. Some that wént, like rocketing pheasants,
over us,

THE CLIFFS

Scaped for the moment, rising gainst the wind :
(They're aéroplanes called!) Or hatted wives in Wales
Them see ; there 'll be the most of them shot down.

SURG. Will Irishmen, if they make Land of Erinn,
(I don't mind saying, that I am one myself ;)
Give those short shrift ; such as found once before,
Amongst them, the Crowns foreign arméd enemies !
Soldiers that through tremendous storm-hurled
billows ;

Which folded round great split Armada ships ;
Wading and buffeting long, with drenching death,
Drowned most of theirs ; wan hardly to strange shore :
Where they, half-perished, died a second death !

FREEMAN. What 's in your hand lad, that you cycling read ?

NEWSB. What, but the SONGS OF BRITAIN'S SACRED BAND.

GODWIN. My lad, what 's that ?

NEWSB. ' My lad,' (says he ;) ' what 's that ? '

I 'm not at your commandment, I 'm off duty :
You don't know London ! This last night, was printed
A ton and more ; and ' Whatsthat ' was, all hot
From Press, sold out at sixpence, in one street.
There 's no boy now, would take a crownpiece for it.
Tonight a new ten thousand will be out.

I 'll bring you some tomorrow with the *piper*.
This is the only copy I have left ;

THE CLIFFS

I bought it, and I 'll keep it for myself.

VICAR. Will you not let me see it ?

NEWSB. Sir, five minutes,

I 'll lend it ; and not more.

(The VICAR takes the book in his hand.)

VICAR. 'T is as he says :

THE MARCHING SONGS, OF BRITAIN'S SACRED BAND.

GODWIN. And will you read some Sir ?

VILLAGERS. We all would hear.

VICAR. What shall I read ; SANCTA BRITANNIA ?

NEWSB. That 's the first song ; and there 's a score
and more,

Besides.

GODWIN. What more ?

NEWSB. *(naming the songs.)* By only virtue is

A Nation saved ; that 's called a ' Hymn of War.'

Mother of mothers, next : Broad Albion, then ;

Our Foreign Foes and Homely Enemies ; then

*There 's, Steady at the Helm ; and Heaven Prosper
Britain ;*

And Overseas, which is the last I know.

To sing the next ; ah, that 's a stirring song !

Called, *The Five Nations*, I am learning now.

*(Enter an Ensign, bearing his regimental Colours ; with
fifes sounding and drums beating, and a sergeants*

THE CLIFFS

party of soldiers. CAPTAIN PAKENHAM and those with him, rise to salute the flag : which is pitched on the village green. Soldiers bivouac around it. Sentinels are posted at the door of the Inn, now about to become headquarters.)

FREEMAN (*to VICAR.*) We would have you to read
BRITANNIA, Sir.

VICAR, (*baring his head, and standing now at the flag : all then uncover.*) SONS OF THE ISLE ; who nigh,
and who far off ;

Sprung from one Mother-Womb, Offspring of
Britain ;

Gather to HER in peril, to defend
Her Foster Shores, which foreign foes invade.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA !

BRITANNIA ; Thy dear Image graven is
On all our hearts, whether our lives we lead,
In the ISLE, or Greater SISTER PROVINCES,
NEW NATIONS of Thy blood, and EMPIRE wide.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA !

Bone of Thy bone, Thy flesh, Thy blood and breath ;
One Speech sounds in our mouths, in all the Earth.
Behold us, one great PARENTAGE of Thy sons,
Which stand, Great Mother, round Thee in bright
arms ;

THE CLIFFS

Strong to maintain Thy RIGHT, derived to us.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

Valiant young men, whose citizen virtue ere
Was in high honour ; win, through new endeavour,
Fresh glory, to this NATION, by proud deeds,
In warfare, gainst your EMPIRES enemies !

In every Age before us, men have laid
Down willingly, for divers worthy cause,
Their faithful lives, and manful marched to death.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

LEAD ON ! With music in our hearts, we march
Ready to warfare : certain only is ;
That every man must die, in age or youth.

We that bear arms, uplift to heaven our hearts ;
Entering in battle, as becometh soldiers :
For the Life of this Nation, be our deaths !

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

Keep the Kings weapons bright, your bodies pure,
Honest, in health ; as wills the LORD OF ARMIES !
To a righteous cheerfulness, your minds composed.
Britons wont other men, in fortitude,
Excell, by sea and land ; in life and death.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

And when we BRITONS stand, before our enemies ;
That for our Fathers' graves and MOTHER fight ;

THE CLIFFS

Contend we only in manhood, who are high
And who of low estate : and which of us
Is stricken down, he gathered shall be laid,
Out of his brothers' arms, to soldiers' rest :
Where, side by side, for ever, they await
The Mercy of Heaven, on their worthy deaths !

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

Tread lightly, where there lies a soldiers grave,
In the wide plain, or on a mountain side.
Sacred be in war-field that lowly mound,
Fenced with wild stones, of hastily dígged earth.

Shall oldmen reverend, bow there their bared heads ;
Our latest kindred guard this faithful dust,
Which fell for Britain, in her battle-ranks.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

Shall seem a Garden, not a Mourning-place,
The comely rows of well-trimmed mounds of grass ;
Whereunder wár-fallen Émpire soldiers sleep ;
That shed, for Britains cause, their generous blood.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

All voices entering there, of British speech ;
Men, wives and children, shall them daily bless ;
Saying, Those their strong young lives laid down
for us,

THE CLIFFS

And Britains Right ! Mothers, their kneeling babes',
(*Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA :*)

White little hands, shall teach to strew each years
Springflowers there; and their lips, the soldiers' names,
That sleep beneath, over those sacred graves,
To say by heart ; last honour of the dead !

Shall honour them, who live in days to come :
Thus shall, from age to age, those deathless rest.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

Brief is his pain, who falls without disease,
Before his foemens face. To heaven, ascend,
Like to an Holy Incense, with his soul,
A Nations Prayers, unto his endless Rest.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

What greater comfort is to dying heart,
Whose eyelids close to that Eternal SLEEP,
Which all awaits, who yieldeth now his breath ;
Than to have well GODS TRUST used of his life.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

How yearns my soul, and burns this heart and pants
This breast, dear Foster Land ! How sweet it were
To fall, to die, for THEE, upon my Face,
Dear Land, which brought me forth, an hundred
deaths.

Sons of the Isle ; SANCTA BRITANNIA.

THE CLIFFS

VICAR. That 's our last verse.

SIR R. BOND. We 'll sing it all together !

VILLAGERS. We will, we all will.

VICAR. Who has a good voice,
To lead us ?

VILLAGERS. Sir, we think this gentleman, Stranger.

VICAR. Will you, Sir Robert Bond ?

SIR R. BOND. I will, most heartily.

(Soldiers, at a word from their Officer, rise up around the Colours. Pacing Sentries halt, and stand at the salute. SIR ROBERT BOND leads, and all bare-headed sing with him together.)

SIR R. BOND. HOW LONGS MY SOUL, AND BURNS MINE
HEART AND PANTS

THIS BREAST, DEAR FOSTER LAND ! HOW SWEET IT
WERE, *(The VICAR embraces the flag.)*

TO FALL, TO DIE, FOR THEE, AN HUNDRED DEATHS !
*(An echo sounding from the Fields.) To fall, to die for
THEE, an hundred deaths !*

THE END



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